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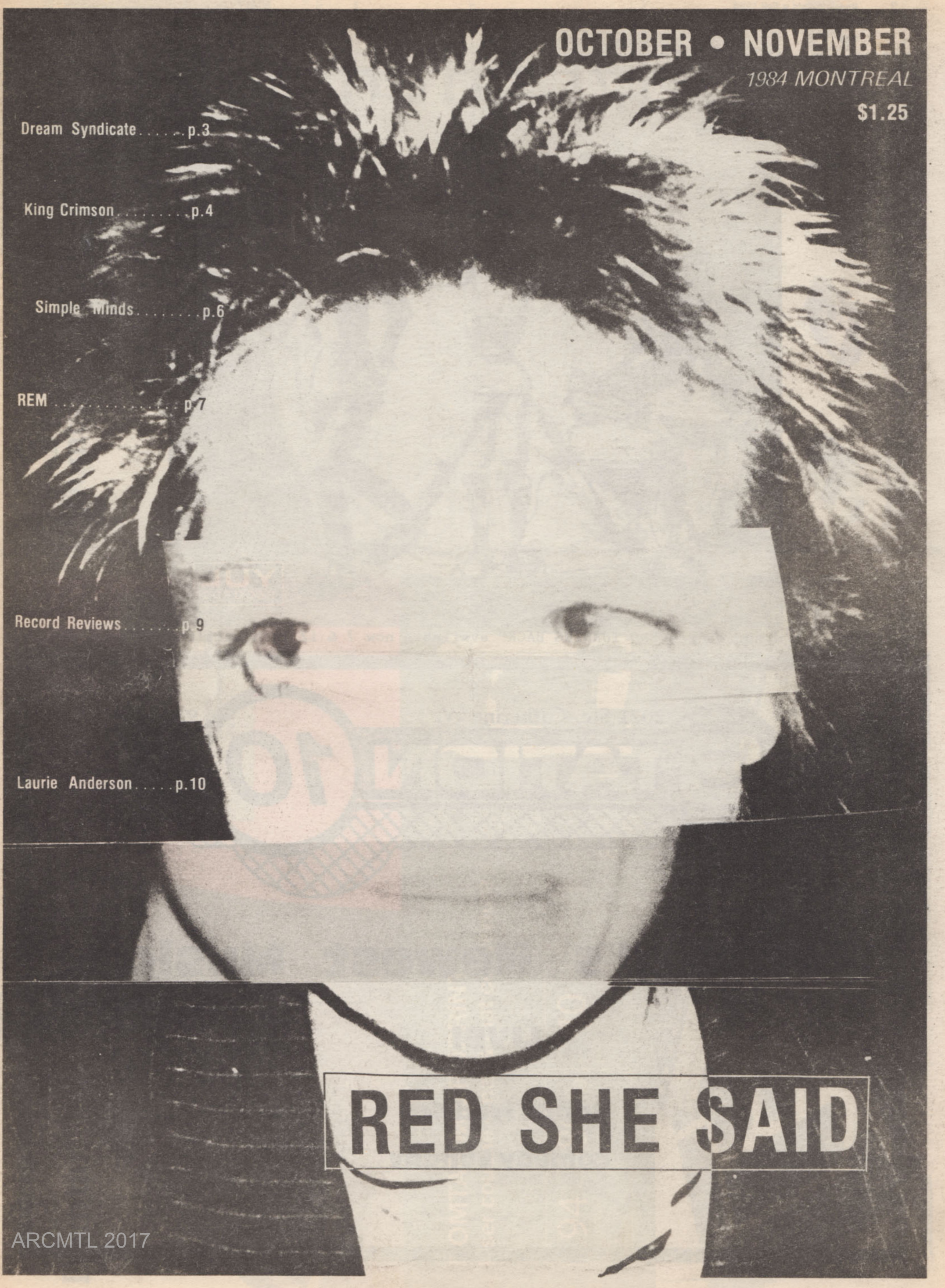

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Dream Syndicate:

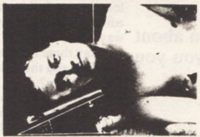
by Marie Catherine Giguere

Steve: We've been compared more to east coast bands and we seem to have more of a following on the east coast.
RSS: Is this why you've been compared to the ***Velvet Underground***?
Steve: Yeah, them and others. We've also been compared to ***Bob Dylan, Television*** and other east coast stuff. But you know, I think it's just the type of music we like. We like the rougher, more ugly, harsher music.

RSS: How do you deal with your record company since you're a non-commercial band in a commercial environment?
Steve: Well, we're on A&M; they have the ***Police, Jeffrey Osborne*** and big stars like Joe Jackson. Then they have bands like us, who they don't expect to sell a million records. They give us the freedom to do what we want.
RSS: Completely?
Steve: Almost entire freedom, yeah. They came to the studio once while we were making the album and that was it. We have a lot of freedom. We'd love to have a hit, we don't want to be obscure, but at the same time they don't bite their nails over whether the ***Dream Syndicate*** will be a hit or not. They just want to have us on their label. They let the Police pay the bills, we're there for their own pride of being hip.
RSS: Do you feel that there's a difference between ***The Medicine Show*** and your last album?
Steve: There's a big difference. In every way, musicaly, lyrically.
RSS: How did you come to do something completely different from what you did before? Did it come spontaneously?
Steve: Well, we changed one member — that was one thing. And also we don't want to do the same album over and over. A lot of bands have their style. Maybe they're ***Duran Duran or Culture Club***, they do their own type of music and you say well I'll expect another album like that and we like to keep changing.

When I was young I always wanted to make a record. You imagine what the record will be like and then you make it, so why make it again? If you feel this is cool, I get to make another record, why make the same one?
RSS: Now that you're becoming more successful people will start to know you from the sound on ***The Medicine Show*** so maybe people will be expecting that on the next album.
Steve: You're right. It's funny, I think a lot of people were surprised when we changed this much and I think a lot of people will expect another ***M edicine Show***, especially since we're playing to a lot more people now than we've ever done before the ***REM*** tour. This is one of the smaller audiences we've had on this tour. It's usually been about two or three thousand. There'll be more people who've never heard of ***Wine and Roses*** who know ***The Medicine Show***. Who knows what'll happen; maybe we'll go back and do an album like ***Wine and Roses*** and people will be surprised again.
RSS: Because you're starting to be put into certain category by the media, does that create a certain tension in the band?
Steve: We don't take the media that seriously. We read the things, we enjoy it, but we don't take it that seriously. We're doing it more for people to enjoy.
RSS: Have you played in Europe before?

Steve: No. We're going there for the first time this fall.
RSS: What type of reaction do you think you'll get?
Steve: I think it will be good because we've had good reviews, good sales, all the things you look for.
RSS: Yes, but we talked to Mike Mills this afternoon and he said that the British press can be very enthusiastic over something and then again the next thing if they don't like something they can just sink you down totally.
Steve: Yeah, that's what I've heard. We've had a lot of friends from L.A. the first time ***X*** went over or ***the Blasters*** went over they got trashed. I don't know why. We've all gotten good reviews so I think it's going to be good. It's just a feeling I have.
RSS: Well you're very different from an English band like ***Depeche Mode*** or something very techno-pop like that.



Steve: Yeah, I think they'll see s different. I hear that right now in England they've discovered the guitar. Well, hallellujah. Thirty years after rock'n'roll started they've just discovered the guitar. So that's fine. And they've never heard of Chuck Berry, but now they've discovered the guitar. So I think they'll be excited to discover a guitar-playing guitar band. They'd like REM over there too,I'm pretty sure.

I'd rather be compared to VU than Depeche Mode

RS8: How did you find the reaction of the crowd tonight?
Steve: Very good. We've played Canada aboput three or four times before, never Montreal. This is probably the best response we've had in Canada. It'd very encouraging.
RSS: Because they've never heard your songs before?
Steve: I think that helps us more than hurts us. Because its such a different band that if people come expecting to hear the band that they heard before they're either disappointed or confused. New audiences in places we've never played before like Boise, Idaho, Salt Lake City, ot of the way plkaces all seem to enjoy us.
RSS: There is a relationship between ***REM*** and you as far as the interest for the ***Velvet Underground*** is concerned. Coulkd you comment on that?
Steve: Well, they seem to like the ***Velvets*** more than we do. They do five different ***Velvets*** songs in their sets. We don't play any. The ***Velvets*** were a very good band.
RSS: But you sound very much like the ***Velvets***, especially your guitar.
Steve; The ***Wine and Roses*** album had some comparisons but not so much anymore. But they're a good band. A real good band. I'd rather get compared to them than ***Depeche Mode*** (much laughter).
RSS: How did the collaboration between the ***Dream Syndicate*** and ***REM*** come about, especially the way you're categorized in the "neo-psychedelic" movement.
Steve: Right. We're very different types of bands with mutual fans..The two bands like each other a lot, and it just came about.

RSS: What kind of future do you see for the neo-psychbedelic movement?
Steve Well, not as a movement but there is a future for good songwriters. and most of the bands seem to have people who know how to write good songs and play with some emotion. I think a lot of these bands will do well. It's just loke when the Kinks, the Animals, the Yardbirds, and the Stones came up. People were saying that this was just white R&B, but before long you didn't hear people saying that the Stones are an R&B band. People said they were a rock band. You shed that after a while.
RSS: Any future plans?
Steve: Well we'll do an album in January.

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King Crimson: What we did for music

Ted E.

RSS First off I would like to talk to you about your solo work. Last time I talked to you you were just putting out **The Lone Rhino**.
AB It has been that long, huh?
RSS About two years.
AB Well, what would you like to know?
RSS Is the band that recorded your latest album, **Twang Bar King** going to be touring because I noticed that on this album you have a drummer, whereas previously you played the drum parts.
AB That band did tour. I made a second album, **Twang Bar King** and the very same band that played on the album toured with me throughout the United States. We played only one place in Canada, in Toronto at the El Mocombo. It was a club tour, generally 600 to 1400 seating clubs was about as large as we ever went. It was very succesful, sold out, lots of fun. We did almost everything from both those albums, as well as **Heartbeat** from King Crimson.
RSS Now, when did that take place?
AB It took place September to October. It was about a six week tour. As far as plans for the future, I think after this tour ends, which is here in Montreal tonight, I will do a lot of recording and experimenting for my next record or my next two or three records. So I don't think I will be touring in the near future.
RSS What do you mean by experimenting? Experimental music?
AB My plan of action is to stay at home and do a lot of recording in the local studio. It is a 24 track studio where I can make records. By experimenting I mean going into the studio and just trying lots of things - particularily guitar things. I have lots of new ideas for sounds. I want to do a lot of music and see what turns out. Some of it may turn into my third solo record, some of it may turn into special editions of guitar music. I have been writing a lot of music that is just music: It doesn't reguire lyrics, it is more in the orchestrial mode.
RSS Who do you keep your best ideas for, yourself or King Crimson, or do you look at it that way?
AB I don't look at it that way. The King Crimson material is written in periods in which the band is together, rehearsing, writing, recording, and producing. The rest of the time that I am away from the band is the time I spend concentrating on my own music. I don't make separations like that. If I have an idea and it is valid and I am working with King Crimson then I am most apt to offer it. I don't hold back.
RSS Would you attribute the longevity of this most recent edition of King Crimson to the way your career is divided — let's say three months with King Crimson and the rest of the time on your own?
AB I would probably attribute it to that. And the idea that the band is made up of four mature individuals who can make their living in their own way, fully apart from the band. It helps that the band comes together for periods of time, and then separates for periods of time — because the King Crimson experience is kind of intense. It is healthy for us to go away from each other and pursue other avenues, do other things, play with other people, do studio gigs — whatever you want — get it out of your system and when we come back we will feel fresh again.
RSS King Crimson is really a big band, it has been around for a long time. Do you use the band to support your solo work?
AB Currently I make more money with King Crimson than I do with my solo thing. They are independent, however, they don't support one another. They are just aspects of the same career. When I first started out in 1977-78 I did a lot of studio things. I would work on one or two songs, or on someone elses album. I am limiting these types of endeavors now, trying to be involved with my own work, or the work of King Crimson. It is more rewarding, it is more challenging, you get to see the music from its inception — it is your piece of art.

When you go in and work on someone elses record it is not that way at all. You give a little bit of yourself and they take over. You have no control over the end result — with the exception of Laurie Anderson, a record I recently did because I enjoy her and her music.
RSS I found it surprising, actually, that she did use a guitar player. In earlier interveiws she said that she felt the electric guitar was a macho instrument and that she would never use one in her music.
AB We had a lovely time together. Maybe she just saw me as a different type of guitarist. You're maybe the third or fourth person that told me she had vowed never to use a guitarist. But I didn't know that when I worked with her. So I didn't ask her about it.
RSS OK. This is the third album with King Crimson and last time I talked to you you said that you would only play for three albums and then see how it goes. Now that you have finished your third, can you say, yes, there will be a fourth?
AB I think that it is quite possible there will be a fourth album.

I don't see any reason why not.

I am allowed some time off from touring to put forth ideas which I didn't think are the right things for King Crimson. They are obviously more personal and therefore should result in Adrian Belew records. As long as I am allowed a period off, then I am ready to do some more. As far as the rest of the members of the band are concerned, I have only heard good reports and I think every thing is going well. The band is growing, changing, there is no reason for us not to make more records.
RSS There is no Frippertonics on this record.
AB No, I think Robert has some new Frippertonic records in the making.
RSS But, he didn't want to use any on this album?
AB Well, just as I said about my own stuff, we have to make our own decisions about what is really befitting King Crimson. Basically it is what we write when we are together, as a collabrative effort. It is not a band where you have one guy telling us what to do. I think maybe sometimes it seems that way but it isn't. It is a collaboration, so everyone puts together the music that is most current for them. So Frippertonics doesn't really fit into it that well.
RSS When King Crimson originally broke up I remember Robert saying it was time to end, while lesser bands went on. When you came back, he said that there was also a reason for coming back to *do* something and make new inroads into the 80's as had been done in the 70's. Would you agree with that? There are a lot of people who wonder why it was called King Crimson again. Now I have heard all kinds of things, like, 'it felt right', but Robert Fripp can usually give a more detailed answer than that.
AB Well, I can't answer for Robert. Sorry, I have no idea of what it meant to him or why he felt good about calling it **King Crimson**. I can tell you why I felt good. First of all, I didn't like the first name Robert offered which was 'Discipline'. Good name for an album, good name maybe for a song, but not for a band. For my tastes it's too unfriendly. So when the possibility arose of calling it **King Crimson**, well, simply put, I like that better as a name than I like 'Discipline' and if those are our two options then I'll choose **King Crimson**. That's my reason. I had no idea at the time **King Crimson** had a very large following or name that we could capitalize on. I didn't see it that way at all. From my perspective, in the mid-west United States, **King Crimson** was a totally unheard of band.

So, I had no reason to feel I would make more money by calling it that and I still sometimes wonder if **King Crimson** the name holds a certain commercial curse to it, in that it's very hard to get people to take this band as a band that can play a good pop song. We can, but radio programmers just refuse to believe that. They all think of us as avant-garde, which I don't think we always are. I don't think there's anything the least Avant-garde about **Heartbeat**

RSS what, I guess I was trying to ask was this, while aknowledging what King Crimson did for the whole progressive music scene (that in the late 70's just fell apart under its own weight), now that you're back together do you see yourself in a similar position with the way that music has gone now?
AB Yes, I do. I do see us following in the same tradition, as making adventurous music no one else would make. Providing therefore an alternative to anyone who's tired of the music they hear made by 95 per cent of the other bands. I think **King Crimson** makes its own sound, has its own presentation of music — in modern terms with all the new technology — and a little bit of heart thrown in, to boot. So in that way I think we are similar to the old King Crimson.
RSS Yeah, that is what I was trying to get at.
AB I think this is part of what we are supposed to be doing: offering up new ways of looking at music. Obviously we have the weaponry that didn't exist 10 to 15 years ago, the guitar synthesizers, the stick. Stuff like that has been to our advantage, so I feel we are making very modern headway.
RSS On the latest album the tracks seem to be deliberately sequenced, with more song oriented stuff on side one and the rest of the album filled up with more experimental avant-garde material.
AB Yeah. Exactly. We were

discriminating in that way for the listener. To put all the song form stuff on one side and all the free form on the other. Robert likes to call it "accesible and excessive" but I just call it 'the songs on one side and the weird stuff on the other'. I personally prefer the weird stuff, which is what I feel we excel at.

RSS Around the time you released your second album (**Beat**) you said that you wanted to concentrate more on vocals. On your latest album the number of songs with vocals is substantially reduced. Are you concentrating more on other things?

Well, it's a little of both. It is just the way it turned out. The **Beat** era was an era in which I felt I had strong lyrical things to present. The **Three of a Perfect Pair** year (that we took to write that album), was not a year in which I had strong statements to make lyrically so I tended to shy back from the singing. I felt the band was really doing some new things musically and I really wanted to push us more in that area. There's a lot more of the free form music than you hear on the **Three of a Perfect Pair** album sitting in recording studios somewhere. And I was really, as I said, taken with that approach for us. We tried our hand at doing pop songs, well I call them pop songs because they have that form: verse, chorus, a verse, bridge, so forth, but I really didn't feel it was what we did best. I felt it compromised a certain part of the band.

I think it comes quite easy to Tony and I, being American musicians - play pop songs in a natural way. I think it's very unnatural for Robert and Bill, English art musicians, art-rock bands — they just don't have that vocabulary. I don't feel it's a comfortable thing for the band, as a whole, to be doing a lot of. So my vote is that now we go back to doing more avant-garde music. This is probably the very opposite of what I told you a year and a half or two years ago, but that's the way things are. That's the change and the growth of the band. I just saw that the band could do a type of music that no one else could do. But lots of other people can do pop songs.

RSS It's like you said earlier, King Crimson are associated more with experimental music and you should stick with that. Also pop songs aren't played by radio people if it has King Crimson on the record label.

AB Well those are all secandary issues to me, the first issue is — what can we do best, that's what we should do and I feel that what we do best is the more extravegant musical forms.

RSS Lark's Tongue is Aspic - part 3. Why did you do that?

AB That was Robert's idea, he felt that it was a continuation of the other Lark's Tongue, and it is obviously more his base of writing style and it worked for so long as a tentative title that eventually it just became what it is.

RSS You were doing Lark's Tongue live, more similar to Lark's Tongue part 2 from the original album than part 1, but part 3 sounds very similar (live) to part 2.

AB For a long time Robert had a lot of these ideas that are part 3. He just hadn't assembled them. The band had to bring them together and say, now this section works here, and this section works following that and this third section doesn't work at all, so why don't you introduce this, — it was a matter of arrangement for us to get that song together. It sounded to Robert like Lark's Tongue part 3 and I felt comfortable with calling it that. No one objected.

I might mention specifically that we are recording these shows. There are four shows here which we'll be recording with an eye to possibly doing a live recording someday. We have recordings from Japan and from France, all over the place.

RSS Last time you played at Place des Arts, a big open concert. I asked you why you were doing it and you said that the band wasn't too sure what type of venues you wanted to use, that you were trying out different things. Now you're back to where you played the first time you were here - different name but the same club (Spectrum). Have you decided that you prefer smaller, more intimate shows?

AB No, not really. To pay the rent we have to do a little of both. That's what we decided in the end. My feelings are that when you play for the outdoor arenas, five, six even twenty thousand, it's really just a performance, a presentation of your music played correctly with a minimal chance of anything new occuring.

When you play in a small setting, a club, where you can see the faces of the people right there in front of you, and everyone can see every little nuance you make, you're more apt to do something new, different, spontaneous. So that's why club settings are better for that. We have to do a little bit of both in order for us to pay for our tour and make a little bit of money out of it. Mostly the United States, which has been the bulk of our tour, has been the larger arenas of five to seven thousand seats. They're very nice and it's a very lovely evening and the music just sort of wafts out into the air. It's not nearly as impersonal as playing the stadiums or something.

So my vote is that now we go back to doing more avant-garde music. This is probably the very opposite of what I told you a year and a half ago but that's the way things are. That's the change and the growth of the band.

ARCMTL 2017

Simple Minds Say Lou Approves

by Marie-Catherine Giguere

This year **Simple Minds** chose to shock and suprise everybody. First, the album **Sparkle in the Rain** caused quite a stir. The sound, on several numbers, bears the imprint of the **Minds'** early influences, chiefly Genesis, along with other flag-bearers of the progressive mega-band era. Secondly, Jim Kerr married Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders.....And, thirdly, the **Sparkle in the Rain** concert was grandiose, a far cry from what the band has done before.

Another striking feature of**Sparkle** is the band's first use of a cover version; and not just anyone...Lou Reed's 'Street Hassle'. Burchill says they chose the song because they like it , and also because the song's structure is very close to the **Minds'** own way of writing their music.

According to bassist, Derek Forbes, Lou Reed is very happy with this new version of 'Street Hassle'.

To many, the bass line has a**Pink Floyd**'s 'One of These Days...' flavour, with an overall atmosphere resembling **Genesis** and **ELP**.

In response, Forbes frowns. Then his eyes light up...'Well I came up with the bass part and submitted it to the rest of the band. We taped it, and thought it was missing something and therefore, it could not be called **Simple Minds**. So we modified it a bit. Anyway, I'm the oldest in the band and the only Protestant (the others are Catholic), and this time I wanted it my way, and its neo-christian design.'

In this, Forbes alludes to the album cover. Both he and Burchill have received negative comments concerning the sleeve. Undoubtedly it is ugly, but both really like it. Burchill explains that the drawing is the artist's interpretation of **Simple Mind**'s music.

On the subject of art, we deviated a bit from the band. Forbes, guitarist-turned-bass-player, is also an artist and writer. He has written a children's story, 'The Adventures of Sally and the Moon People', which he also illustrated.

'I love children', he says. 'I can't wait to have one myself', he adds with a smile. 'But, right now, **Simple Minds** comes first. I'll get back to writing stories later'.

As for Burchill, he just loves his friend's talent. He describes it as 'wacky'. Forbes can also draw caricatures. At the suggestion that he could, perhaps, design the next album cover, he laughs. 'Like the Tom Tom Club, that's an idea...' says the guitarist. But as far as the **Simple Minds** are concerned, Forbes would rather remain a musician.

What holds the band together is a strong friendship. Jim Kerr and Charles Burchill are childhood buddies. They used to hitch-hike across Europe together. Last summer, they took off to India. The reason for this was manifold-to take a vacation, get away from it all, tighten the bond between them. 'It's important to have ties in a world that changes all the time' Burchill says.

Back in England, studio work started. Steve Lillywhite was hired as producer. Because of this, the **Minds** were compared to the likes of **U2** and the **Psychedelic Furs** in the majority of American magazines.

'It's their problem' says Forbes of these journalists. But he does not view such comparisons as a danger to the group's U.S. career. 'Besides, we've wanted to hire Lillywhite since the 'Real to Real Cacophony' album. He just didn't have the time. So we were happy to finally get him for **Sparkle**.

Burchill explains the public's reaction to the album in quite simple terms: People got too attached to **New Gold Dream.**

He hit the nail on the head....Apparently, even the musicians themselves were wondering about their musical direction during the recording sessions. They are happy with the results, and it shows...a lot.

Simple Minds gave two concerts on the first weekend of June. A show that was impressive with its sophisticated lights, its powerful sound and the crowd's reaction. Everyone loved it...except the old fans. The group has gained popularity, no doubt about it; it would seem to prove its viability. On the other hand, the old magic has been lost to a more pragmatic rock-star pose approach.

As for the live rendition of the music, there were many suprises. We heard nothing from 'Empires and Dance' and the songs taken from 'Sons and Fascination' and 'New Gold Dream' were a scream. There was an interesting bass intro to 'The American'. Obviously, it's always fun to hear live material that's slightly different from the album version. The**Minds** are good at that. Unfortunately, the very soul of numbers like 'Glittering Prize' and 'New Gold Dream' was cut out. 'Love Song' was impossible to decipher. 'Promised you a Miracle' was funky, funny. The crowd was hysterical...

RSS: Sparkle in the Rain suprised me. It's so different, so unexpected. What happened?

Charles Burchill: It's a fact that the album requires much more attention than **'New Gold Dream'**, which was quite easy to listen to. It's oriented towards performance. The recording is more straight forward, with much less special effects.

RSS: That's because of Steve Lillywhite.

CB: What he has succeded in doing, is to add much more energy to our music. We've never really been able to have a true live sound in our previous albums. It's not the actual sound, but rather the atmosphere that's electrical. **New Gold Dream** was easy to reproduce on stage. The new album, on the other hand, represents much more of a challenge.

RSS: But now, **Simple Minds** are reproached for becoming more commercial, of becoming a rock band......

CB: One of these days, someone will have to explain what it is like, an album that's oriented towards radio, because I don't know. We've been playing the same songs on stage for so long, it was getting boring. We've lost nothing of our integrity. It's this habit of categorizing music that does that, because there's nothing rock to our album. (Pause) Well, I don't know, maybe we are really a rock band. (Giggles).

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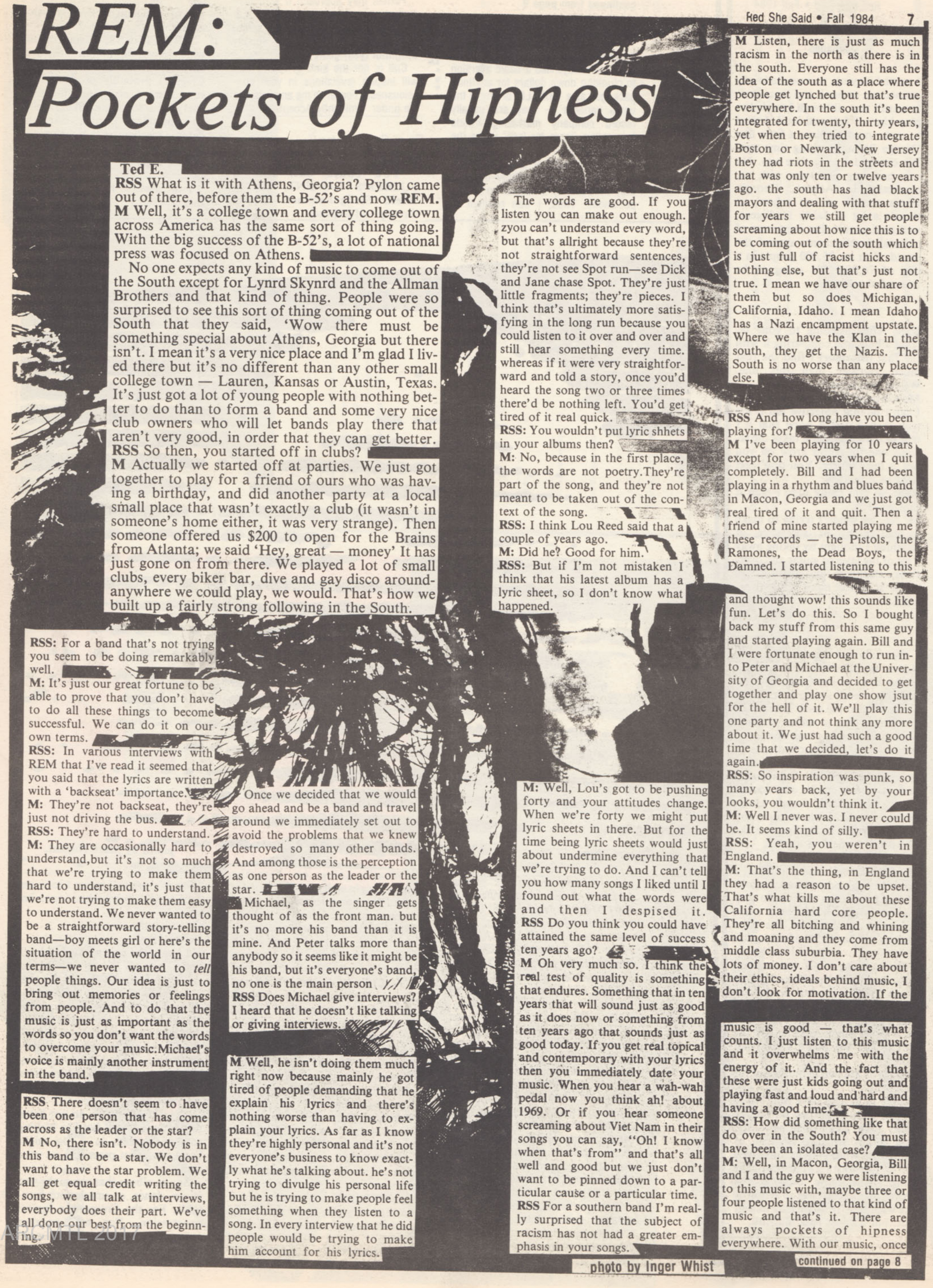

Ted E.

RSS What is it with Athens, Georgia? Pylon came out of there, before them the B-52's and now **REM.**

M Well, it's a college town and every college town across America has the same sort of thing going. With the big success of the B-52's, a lot of national press was focused on Athens.

No one expects any kind of music to come out of the South except for Lynrd Skynrd and the Allman Brothers and that kind of thing. People were so surprised to see this sort of thing coming out of the South that they said, 'Wow there must be something special about Athens, Georgia but there isn't. I mean it's a very nice place and I'm glad I lived there but it's no different than any other small college town — Lauren, Kansas or Austin, Texas. It's just got a lot of young people with nothing better to do than to form a band and some very nice club owners who will let bands play there that aren't very good, in order that they can get better.

RSS So then, you started off in clubs?

M Actually we started off at parties. We just got together to play for a friend of ours who was having a birthday, and did another party at a local small place that wasn't exactly a club (it wasn't in someone's home either, it was very strange). Then someone offered us $200 to open for the Brains from Atlanta; we said 'Hey, great — money' It has just gone on from there. We played a lot of small clubs, every biker bar, dive and gay disco around-anywhere we could play, we would. That's how we built up a fairly strong following in the South.

RSS: For a band that's not trying you seem to be doing remarkably well.

M: It's just our great fortune to be able to prove that you don't have to do all these things to become successful. We can do it on our own terms.

RSS: In various interviews with REM that I've read it seemed that you said that the lyrics are written with a 'backseat' importance.

M: They're not backseat, they're just not driving the bus.

RSS: They're hard to understand.

M: They are occasionally hard to understand,but it's not so much that we're trying to make them hard to understand, it's just that we're not trying to make them easy to understand. We never wanted to be a straightforward story-telling band—boy meets girl or here's the situation of the world in our terms—we never wanted to *tell* people things. Our idea is just to bring out memories or feelings from people. And to do that the music is just as important as the words so you don't want the words to overcome your music.Michael's voice is mainly another instrument in the band.

RSS There doesn't seem to have been one person that has come across as the leader or the star?

M No, there isn't. Nobody is in this band to be a star. We don't want to have the star problem. We all get equal credit writing the songs, we all talk at interviews, everybody does their part. We've all done our best from the beginning.

Once we decided that we would go ahead and be a band and travel around we immediately set out to avoid the problems that we knew destroyed so many other bands. And among those is the perception as one person as the leader or the star.

Michael, as the singer gets thought of as the front man. but it's no more his band than it is mine. And Peter talks more than anybody so it seems like it might be his band, but it's everyone's band, no one is the main person

RSS Does Michael give interviews? I heard that he doesn't like talking or giving interviews.

M Well, he isn't doing them much right now because mainly he got tired of people demanding that he explain his lyrics and there's nothing worse than having to explain your lyrics. As far as I know they're highly personal and it's not everyone's business to know exactly what he's talking about. he's not trying to divulge his personal life but he is trying to make people feel something when they listen to a song. In every interview that he did people would be trying to make him account for his lyrics.

The words are good. If you listen you can make out enough. zyou can't understand every word, but that's allright because they're not straightforward sentences, they're not see Spot run—see Dick and Jane chase Spot. They're just little fragments; they're pieces. I think that's ultimately more satisfying in the long run because you could listen to it over and over and still hear something every time. whereas if it were very straightforward and told a story, once you'd heard the song two or three times there'd be nothing left. You'd get tired of it real quick.

RSS: You wouldn't put lyric shhets in your albums then?

M: No, because in the first place, the words are not poetry.They're part of the song, and they're not meant to be taken out of the context of the song.

RSS: I think Lou Reed said that a couple of years ago.

M: Did he? Good for him.

RSS: But if I'm not mistaken I think that his latest album has a lyric sheet, so I don't know what happened.

M: Well, Lou's got to be pushing forty and your attitudes change. When we're forty we might put lyric sheets in there. But for the time being lyric sheets would just about undermine everything that we're trying to do. And I can't tell you how many songs I liked until I found out what the words were and then I despised it.

RSS Do you think you could have attained the same level of success ten years ago?

M Oh very much so. I think the real test of quality is something that endures. Something that in ten years that will sound just as good as it does now or something from ten years ago that sounds just as good today. If you get real topical and contemporary with your lyrics then you immediately date your music. When you hear a wah-wah pedal now you think ah! about 1969. Or if you hear someone screaming about Viet Nam in their songs you can say, "Oh! I know when that's from" and that's all well and good but we just don't want to be pinned down to a particular cause or a particular time.

RSS For a southern band I'm really surprised that the subject of racism has not had a greater emphasis in your songs.

M Listen, there is just as much racism in the north as there is in the south. Everyone still has the idea of the south as a place where people get lynched but that's true everywhere. In the south it's been integrated for twenty, thirty years, yet when they tried to integrate Boston or Newark, New Jersey they had riots in the streets and that was only ten or twelve years ago. the south has had black mayors and dealing with that stuff for years we still get people screaming about how nice this is to be coming out of the south which is just full of racist hicks and nothing else, but that's just not true. I mean we have our share of them but so does Michigan, California, Idaho. I mean Idaho has a Nazi encampment upstate. Where we have the Klan in the south, they get the Nazis. The South is no worse than any place else.

RSS And how long have you been playing for?

M I've been playing for 10 years except for two years when I quit completely. Bill and I had been playing in a rhythm and blues band in Macon, Georgia and we just got real tired of it and quit. Then a friend of mine started playing me these records — the Pistols, the Ramones, the Dead Boys, the Damned. I started listening to this and thought wow! this sounds like fun. Let's do this. So I bought back my stuff from this same guy and started playing again. Bill and I were fortunate enough to run into Peter and Michael at the University of Georgia and decided to get together and play one show jsut for the hell of it. We'll play this one party and not think any more about it. We just had such a good time that we decided, let's do it again.

RSS: So inspiration was punk, so many years back, yet by your looks, you wouldn't think it.

M: Well I never was. I never could be. It seems kind of silly.

RSS: Yeah, you weren't in England.

M: That's the thing, in England they had a reason to be upset. That's what kills me about these California hard core people. They're all bitching and whining and moaning and they come from middle class suburbia. They have lots of money. I don't care about their ethics, ideals behind music, I don't look for motivation. If the music is good — that's what counts. I just listen to this music and it overwhelms me with the energy of it. And the fact that these were just kids going out and playing fast and loud and hard and having a good time.

RSS: How did something like that do over in the South? You must have been an isolated case?

M: Well, in Macon, Georgia, Bill and I and the guy we were listening to this music with, maybe three or four people listened to that kind of music and that's it. There are always pockets of hipness everywhere. With our music, once

photo by Inger Whist

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continued

I started playing, no one made any connection to punk and there really wasn't any, although I tended to play kind of fast and loud. I used to make my bass lines a little like Deedge Ramone a long time ago. We changed a long time ago. No one had any problems with us, especially in Athens, Georgia where there's an art school so there's a lot of fairly intelligent, well-read people that are aware of cultural developments around the world. You get 25,000 people in a city of 70,000, it's going to be somewhat tolerant.

RSS: After listening to your second album and comparing it with the first (**Murmur**) I find the first much catchier than this one. Would you agree?
M: It's hard for me to say because I can't be that objective but if it's true then I would hope that it's true in the sense that it takes the second one longer to grow on you but it lasts longer. You don't get tired of it quickly.
RSS: So you really didn't plan it that way?
M: No, we weren't trying to make it less catchy or accessible, if anything I thought by taking away a lot of the layered guitar and overdubs, thickness and texture, we made it a lot more straightforward.

Our only real conscious thought is that we didn't want to make it sound like the first one. **Murmur** had this overall sound to it. Every song sounded the same in terms of production not in terms of songwriting although some would say that as well. On the second one, we thought that the songs were better so we took each one individually and gave each one its own sound. Maybe that in itself made it a little bit more inaccessible because you don't get into a kind of groove like you do with the first one.
RSS: What's next?
M: "Rockville" came out as a single in England and we have four or five new things that we do during the set but it will be a while before we record them. We hope that we still have a lot of mileage in this album.

We're trying to get together and do a single with Van Dyke Parts as a one ????? thing but that's very nebulous, we don't know when that's going to happen. There may be another single coming off the album but we don't know that either.
RSS: Why are you in music and for how long?
M: We're in it to have fun. We're serious about what we do but we don't take it all that seriously. You've got to have a sense of humour in what you do, otherwise you're just wasting your time. The thing about music today is that people take themselves *so* seriously like what they're doing is *so* important, but it's just rock and roll.

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Riley

By Andy Carin

I have always had a basic aversion to plunking down dollars for anything packaged as a 'MINI LP' or any of the usual variants — they are usually record company marketing frauds trumpeting 'more for less' when the reverse is true.

Splinter groups or solo efforts are even more suspect, simply because they infrequently measure up to expectations. Thus, I was hesitant to pick up **Cull**, even after a local salesman goaded me by announcing that it was a work done by ex-FALLMAN Riley. Neverthless, some weeks later, in a buying blitz it wound up in my collection, doomed, I thought, to be played once and then permanently filed between Martin Rev and Rip, Rig & Panic. Such was not the case.

Martin Bramah (Blue Orchids) was the first example that THE FALL did not rise from Mark Smith alone. Riley is the second. (All of which immediately sent me back for another listen to 'Live at the Witch Trials', the only album which includes all three.)

Cull is inevitably FALL-like in most instances, though with somewhat less caustic (and often unintelligible) vocals. However, 'Violins' 'Sex and death and a song - it's where sex and death belong' is a particularly poignant statement. 'Jumper Clown' veritably explodes out of your speakers causing the same (though less powerful) type of reverberation that caused empty brains to ask 'How I Wrote Elastic Man' 32 times.

Purists may approach it with consternation, but a song such as 'Location Bangladesh' boasts some splendid spindly guitar, and equally delightful (yes) goofy organ.

Cull is not the kind of record that will inspire revelations in your consciousness. Forget all the analysis and file under 'Eminently Acceptable'.

and . . .

The Creepers

by Andy Carin

'You could call this a FUCKER'S LAMENT, boy' - Wield Sledgehammer. Apply directly to forehead.'

photo by Mark Nugent.

What's going on here,(the reader might well ask)...No sooner asked for than released, **Gross Out** is the immediate follow-up to **Cull**. While the latter is billed as a collection of 'the singles', the former is a truly diverse album. **The Creepers** (Riley, Pete Keogh, Paul Fletcher & Eddie Fenn) can now be deemed an ongoing concern, for they are productive, if not prolific.

Two of the songs on the album are again reserved for the Riley - Hanley - Hanley - Scanlan lineup. 'Earwig O'Dowd' and 'Teacher Travel' obviously exhibit the more pronounced abrasion factor. 'Earwig (look that one up in your Websters dictionary) bangs out some noise merchandising that would leave Half Japanese proud.

DIVERSITY. 'Railroad' is a gen-u-ine down-home foot stomper.

DIVERSITY. 'Snipe' is for those that prefer their sound uncooked, unseasoned, and just plain RAW.

DIVERSITY.'Freaky Sleeper' has the unwitting audacity to be a pop tune on a distinctly contra-pop album.

GREATNESS. The motor which drives this album is the electrifying, anthemic 'Gross'. **The Creepers** probably produced this song instead of channelling their energy into something like trashing an apartment; rather like the defense mechanism that makes one laugh grimly instead of flying into a blind rage.

I've always been an artistic fucker.

With mirrors and music I took her
I made her scream when I took her

Can't handle a woman
Be coy, boy
Hit her in the face with a full brick fist.

Certainly not the most diplomatic response to 'depraved sexual antics', yet indicative of anyone's sentiments at one time or many others. Clocking in at better than seven and a half minutes, 'Gross' is the sort of composition that forcefully extracts attention. ATTENTION

A word of advice: do not listen to this song if you feel like kicking someone's teeth in - you might break your feet practising on your walls.

So: an album that can make you wince, dance, or smash your turntable. For the **Creepers**, a logical progression. For me, another copy; mine is quickly being worn out.

RECORD REVIEWS

David Sylvain

By Marie-Catherine Giguere

Following Japan's breakup a year and a half ago, David Sylvain has stepped out of semi-retirement with his first solo album **Brilliant Trees**. He proves to be more than just a wailing vocalist. However, Japan's influence will not be so easily forgotten; as can be heard throughout the album.

Influences aside, Sylvian is backed by powerful musicianship. He has suceeded in obtaining the collaboration of such artists as ex-Can Holger Czukay (who co-wrote the songs); experimental trumpeter Jon Hassel, long-time friend Ryuichi Sakamoto from Yellow Magic Orchestra, as well as Brother Steve Jansen and keyboardist Richard Barbieri, both formerly from Japan. Steve Nye, who previously worked with the defunct group, contributes as producer and pianist.

Brilliant Trees is an atmospheric record, the type one listens to in quiet moments. 'Nostalgia' is reminiscent of Czukay's earlier works like 'Canaxis'. 'Red Guitar', the single, is a musical piece with a very strong jazz feel to it. 'Pulling Punches' resembles Japan very much.

Sylvian gives us a subtle music. Musical phrases are interwoven, creating a web of delicate surprises. This LP requires undivided attention on the part of the listener; it will not be absorbed quickly.

With his first solo effort, balanced by an equal share of strength and sensitivity, David Sylvian shows signs of a promising career. **Brilliant Trees** is not to be missed...I second that emotion...

The Smiths

by Craig Avon

Every six months or so, a band is shot into critical prominence, not so much through its' own abilities, hype, or universality of appeal, but because it has caught the general mood of the moment. **The Smiths**, as a wholly justifiable reaction against all the damaging ideas of the last two or three years, are such a band. But there's a little more to them than that.

The Human League's "Dare" was a very conscious, up front and bold effort of forcing a major change in modern music; in the use of the synthesizer. The artistic success of "Dare" is open to debate, but its' commercial suuccess certainly is not. The sight of a completely electronic band at the top of the charts all around the world stirred the hearts and wallets of musicians everywhere. The rather sinister electronic invasion was on. You too can push a few buttons and make a mint. I don't begrudge the League a penny; they'd spent years in the wilderness studying the implications of electronic wizardry, arm in arm with the Gristles and Voltaires. But the average punter with album money in his pocket simply can't tell the difference between 'genuine visionaries' like Oakey and two-hit sellouts, bandwagon-hopping notalents like the Thompson Twits.

The damn things are just so easy to play. I'm not pulling some elitist argument about 'paying my dues', or 'good musicianship'; it's just a question of spending time creatively. Guitars, or pianos or violins, or anything else termed 'old-fashioned' are quite simply instruments of immense possible permutations and tactility. A monophonic synthesizer doesn't require experience or sensitivity — it just makes that not unpleasant but desperately identical noise. A musical future dominated by synthesizers as they are presently used is very bleak indeed.

The Smiths make us realise that. Their purity stands out effortlessly in the dark world they inhabit, even the cloth-eared public has warmed to them. A song like "Reel Around the Fountain" doesn't squeal at you; it weaves around you, deciding visual patterns, layering and stroking. As far as I am concerned it could go on forever. It is, above all, subtle. On the other hand, **Hand in Glove** is anything but, yet it too has the feeling of space and expansion, not the constriction of electronic beat.

The Smiths are not a regression. They simply play the canny conservatives, and shake their heads at the dopey young Syntho-rebels and remind them that change is only nessecary when you come up with a viable replacement that is better than what you had before.

The Lyres

by Andy Carin

Yes Virginia, the LYRES still exist. Between Ace of Hearts Records' apparent scarcity in Montreal, and the band's less-than-prolific output, (the last was a 4-song 12 inch in 1981) any skepticism is understandable.

Boston's Newbury street label has released quiet quality in the last three years - Neighbouhoods, Neats, Mission of Burma - but distribution here has been terrible.

Even if 'On Fyre' makes it into the stores, its cover is hardly recognizable, with no name or title. Only a wooden replica of the stringed instrument set afire in the desert of Arizona could provide a clue to potential buyers.

Lyre's music is distinctly non-psychedelic; if you're into analogies, perhaps a revved up Jefferson Airplane without wings will do, i.e. take a guitar and bass, activate the drums, pound on an organ, and wrap carefully in a garage.

'Help You Ann' was released as a single, and created quite a bit of notice all over the New England area. It's the type of song that, given the chance by otherwise conformist radio moguls, would blow Culture George or Springsteen right out of the top 40. Airplay perfect at two and a half minutes and full of all the right hooks, 'Help You Ann' is one of the five or six very good songs on this album.

Sit back and ask yourself how many new albums you've purchased in the last year or so; then ask yourself how many are completely enjoyable side to side. This writer has found that category terribly lacking of late. Not so with 'On Fyre'. Slap it on your turntable, and have a little fun listening to no frills, fuckin' good rock and roll.

Pale Foundations

by Craig Avon

Call yourself the Pale Foundations and you are asking for it really. You get all sorts of self-appointed guardians of the machismo element in rock n' roll calling you wimpy. Just because you prefer love to sex or because you play acoustic guitars or even because you are one of the few people around who know how to write a song.

Sorry, I know it is an unfriendly thing to do these days. One doesn't write music these days one "sculpts" it, like Simple Minds, or new golden boys, the Blue Nile. No longer are fans suckered in by intelligence, as reflected in the sudden shock of the chord changes in "Help" or "What do I Get". Our new modern audiences prefer the drug-like trance of synth and perfect production. Song? Whats that?

"Abergele Next Time", for example. "Is There Something I Should Know", for another (this one was so much a song I was sure it was a cover of some old 40's tune until I checked the credits). There is a world of inventiveness just in the chords alone. The great thing about the Paleys, however, is they don't stop there. First, young Micheal Head wracks his brain to come up with those chords and those melodies. Then he displays a tremendous talent for finding words whose sound and rythmn is as affecting as their actual meaning. "Try the Library its E27 to E103, may look right daft on paper, but it works beautifully when you drape it over the 8th line of your second verse.

Enter the rest of the **Pale Foundations**. I am afraid I never paid much attention to the **Diagram Brothers** when they were around (did anybody?), more the pity, since they must have been of some value judging by the wonderful talent of **Diagram**, now a full fledged **Pale Foundation**. Saxaphone is one thing to arrange into your music — trumpets are quite another. Even **Dexys** couldn't manage that. **Diagrams** does it and goes on to compound his crime with delicate piano touches. The result of this arranging technology is a completely different atmostphere for each track, a fine example of the individuality and the integrity of "the song", so alien to todays blind worship of "the sound".

All power to this band. They stand out as a beacon of correct thinking in what is increasingly becoming a New Wave wasteland.

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It's a Big Stage Laurie

by Jeff Noble

Laurie Anderson is reaching more people than ever before with her performances. People smile at Laurie Anderson concerts. Laurie Anderson T-shirts do not sell very well. Many people have heard of Laurie Anderson. Very talented people help create Laurie Anderson records and performances. Laurie Anderson tickets are expensive. Many people buy them. Laurie Anderson works very hard. Laurie Anderson smiles a lot.

Febuary 1980 "I believe that the structures and intentions of my work are best understood by other artists."

May 1984 Laurie Anderson sells out six performances at The Spectrum in Montreal.

It is very difficult to characterise the Anderson audience. In much the same way it is difficult to characterise her art. For various reasons many don't bother. While it is becoming easier to do it, some intangible quality still eludes the analyst. Perhaps mere humanity.

The audience sits back and enjoys a well-honed, professional show. Laurie sings. They clap. The stage is big enough to hold all the equipment. So are the trucks. The Spectrum technicians are considerate enough to place the PA speakers above the floor because people don't like to sit in front of them. There is usually a safe distance between the stage and the audience, but there is no problem hearing the music.

RSS I read a quote you had made: "My idea of a perfect performance is like a bad movie where you notice everything around you. At a good movie you just fall away". I like that because it points to the sensitivity of the audience, the interaction, the heightened sensation. The opposite of that would be a performance that picks you up and carries you away, like a drug I guess. I'm just wondering how you feel the present format of your performance with the big lights, the big stage, and, I imagine the big sound, lends itself to audience sensitivity and interaction? Is it not being imposed on people?

LA Well, it is certainly, whenever you stand on a stage by yourself, you are imposing yourself. That's certainly true. It's not a conversation. I do have a very good view of people's faces and that's how I learn a lot about what I do.

RSS Are you able to respond to different moods and atmostpheres, is the performance not set, can you tailor the show's variables?

LA Well that depends. For instance, last night we were going to perform the last song at the bar. I started out there but there were just too many people. But sure it is more difficult in a situation that is so defined, like this, of a stage and an audience. It also depends on the audience, how it develops, how personalities develop, audience personalities.

January 1980 "In performances I tend to emphasise the local effect — the physical aspects of the room — by sending standing waves through the room so people in the audience can physically feel the space they displaced."

True, The Spectrum posesses a commanding presence, the sort of which you become very much aware. You can't deny it. Laurie Anderson highlighted my perception of the space. I stayed anyway. Many others did too.

A handful of people saw "Duets on Ice" on streets in Italy and New York a way back in 1973. Anderson played a violin (in her way) while wearing ice skates embedded in ice. Inside the body of the violin was a small cassete and speaker which played country and western songs. I am not sure how many people stayed until the ice melted. The frailty was her strength. Even now, metamorphosised from the mid-western, white gowned waif into the spike-haired modern hero, the frailty, at times, is still her strength. Or at least what makes her different.

RSS Did you ever improvise? I was thinking about your old performances like "Duets on Ice" (where she played violin while wearing skates embedded in ice).

LA Some of it was improvised, a lot of it was on tape, in a machine inside the violin. Half of it was improvised.

RSS Do you consider yourself to be a 'musician'?

LA Then? Or do I now?

RSS Either.

LA I certainly didn't then. I used the instrument not like a musical instrument. It was a ventriloquist dummy. And now...I don't think of myself particulariliy as a musician. Or as a filmmaker. I do think of myself as someone who tells stories and uses words, that would be my own definition.

RSS Do you like the music on your record, or is that kind of secondary?

LA No, I like it. I think it stands as a record.

RSS So you are a bit fonder of basses and drums.

LA Uh, O.K. Don't rub it in. "I'll never use a guitar". Well, besides, I don't think Adrien Belew plays guitar. I don't know what that is...It's a rhinocerous voice box.

That this humble, wonderful *woman* also dares to tamper with the higher order of technology distinguishes her from the norm.

RSS:How close do you feel, and what is your relationship sensually to all this equipment, the "urban reality"? Do you feel close to it?

LA: Well, I love electronics. I like it because it's fast, like the brain. It has to go through circuitry, but its pretty quick.

One of the reasons I build in escapes in this work is because things always break. Always, yeah, there's too many systems here that are too delicate and they always break and that's my favourite part. I like that.

RSS That's what I was going to ask you. Do you let the machinery live? Does it exist independently or is that too accepting of its power, its pre-eminence?

LA They're just pieces of metal, they're not robots. They don't know very much. I try to be careful with them and treat them as musical instruments.

RSS When they break or become disordered do you cut them out, get rid of them?

LA Yes, we have back up systems — and I have a screwdriver.

RSS 'Cause I like broken machines, I like their life.

LA Yeah, they're trying to do something.

RSS You have been described as a "neutral doer". You are the object in your performance, since you are somewhat removed because of the vocoder, your costumes, masks, etc. Your physical presence is not foremost. So you are the medium through which all these different voices speak. And therefore your technology is the subject of your performance. So by creating the impression of this seamless technological perfection, like you see in Kraftwerk, do you think that you tempt people into this myth, in spite of the irony and the allusions you construct to the contrary? Do you think people are drawn into that?

LA No, I think people are hipper than that. It is a very different thing to me that way, technology, as you point out, and its opposite, the cult of the personality: The rock star doing, 'look at me, look at me'. Now, if I am doing 'look out there — machines', and encouraging people to think that art might as well be machines, then I am making a big mistake. 'Cause what I am doing is ultimately to use machines, not be used by them. When they break they are just pieces lying on the floor.

RSS But I think it is very tempting now especially because of this electro-syntho-blitz for people to come in to a place like this (The Spectrum), and think — yeah, this is it. They identify with you as some technology goddess.

LA Oh yes, I think there are a lot of interesting electronic machines around and it's a wonderful thing for a young musician starting out to try them out. But ultimately of course, it's not machines that make music, it's people, and they'll find that out real fast. But I know what you mean about Kraftwerk. To me that's quite frightening. And maybe some people have that reaction to my work. I really hope not.

Objective interpretations of her richly textured work-image collages are fleeting. They become necessary when the context attempts real analysis. Much of her work is veiled in evocative imagery 'supported' by frequently vague, uncertain textural allusions. The content is often smothered by the weight of the structures, though the two are gradually being wed. These formal structures, musical ones predominantly at this point, are well crafted and carefully excecuted by certainly 'competent' musicians. Weaving in and out of these delicate pieces are tasteful images of, for example nuclear strike forces, silhouette images, it should be noted, lacking dimensions or depth.

As in most current music her glossy surfaces reveal bits of the workings and divert the listener from understanding what is boldly alluded to. Does she owe us the answer? Would we take it if she knew?

LA While I'm criticising technology, I'm also using it to make a criticism, and I think people often forget that. They think it's only what you are saying is the whole message. They forget how you are saying it. With 25,000 watts.

RSS Do you think that people get the sense of laughter and joy when its planted admidst videos and amplifiers? Do you think it might come out as cynical, hollow laughter?

LA Well, I hope not. I don't think so. I leave a lot of room for interpretation. I really don't want to spell things out for people and tell them what the story is. I don't have a whole kind of world-view packaged up for people.

RSS Do you have any conclusive beliefs about this state of the world, or the state of the world in which you choose to set yourself?

LA Yeah, I do. But they are quite provisional and they are connected to images and sounds as much as ideas. I am trying to make a balance between being personally and socially responsible citizen and artistically amoral.

RSS Do you think there is a fairly direct connection between amorality and art?

LA For me there is. I don't like to be told things, I like to figure things out for myself. So I figure that other people can too. I consider the job of an artist not that of a preacher or a politician. There are plenty of those people. I consider my job to make images and create atmostpheres that make people go "HMMMMM.."

Perhaps it depends on how urgently one sees the need for change, or more so, how sincerely one feels their beliefs have real weight, depth and life. One asks only that the proportion of her work that deals with the 'issues' relects in the same degree her real personal concerns. There would be no reason to suppress, or inflate this ratio, except to sell a record.

Laurie Anderson is a really nice woman. That's how she sells records. Her voice is comforting, soothing. The music eases by, gently curvaceous. The words arouse curiosity.

This is her music. Even masked, a vocorder comforting the voice, her presence is unmistakable. A person is standing on stage talking to us. And she is smiling.

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Getting a Fix on Liquid Sky

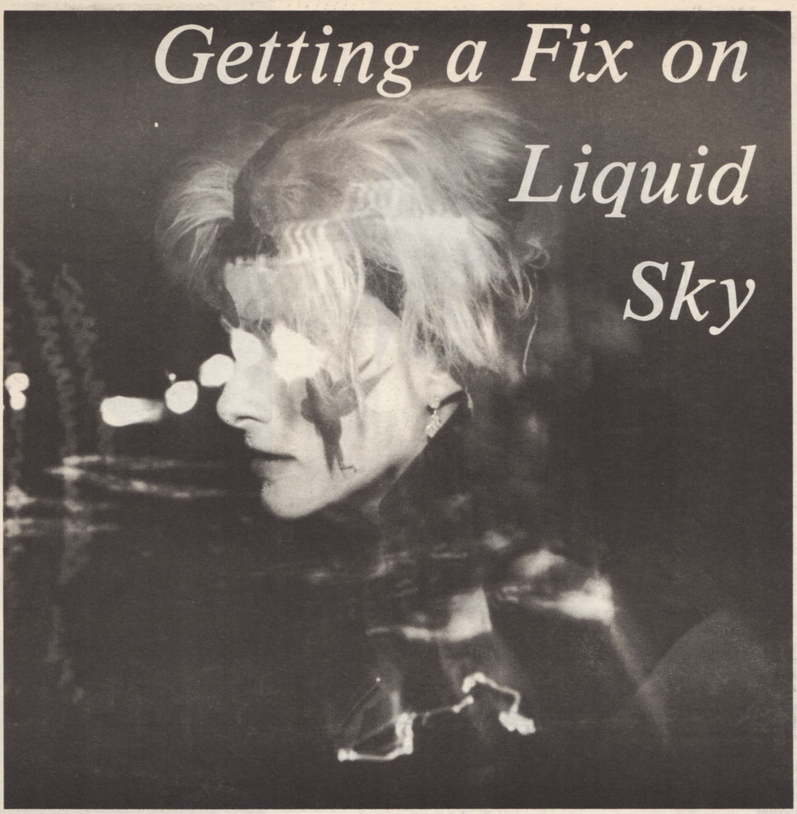

photo by Yuri Neyman

home late at night and someone, his alter ego, is there saying, 'You have one night to make your decision.' The audience is not told what the decision is about. The alter ego tells the man it doesn't matter and tries to prove to him all society is determined by statistics, quantum mechanics and there is no place for morality.

The Deputy Minister of Film Industry said, 'Our purpose in creating films is to enlighten people, to give them clear instructions. This movie doesn't give people clear instructions. We never made movies like this, we don't make them now and we are never going to start.'

Everyone understood the decision in the movie as whether a person should emigrate from Russia or not.

K: The difference between American propaganda and Russian propaganda is this: In America we have propaganda, but we still have independent movies which people can see. In Russia we have propaganda and independent movies too, but independent films are not seen. They are only shared between the artists.

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T: I don't feel like I'm trapped in society. People are trapped equally in all societies. Most are trapped and do not find it bad. It is very convenient for them.

K: You can't be free from society ever. As soon as you accept the values you are caught.

I still have dreams about my childhood in Russia. But, they are only dreams. I don't remember anything. My life for the last ten years in the U.S. was a total struggle in doing movies. You go to sleep with the movies in your head and you wake up to do the movies in the morning.

RSS: Did you try to make **Liquid Sky** a shocker.

T: We tried to be shocking. You can't get people to think unless you shock them. And, that's what I do.

photo by Ron Levine

Tsukerman, Kerova, and Carlisle

C:There are a lot of young people who are ambivalent about sex. They don't have any over-riding drive. In Margaret's mind he (the alien) is the prince, but then again he's only a UFO that kills people. This is a different kind of alien than those in Close Encounters for example. The alien is closer to the B-52's than ET.

T:There was a huge part of the ending that was cut off completely. There was a philosophical conversation when the alien speaks with all the other humans and explains all these things. And then there is a big part about prisons, how these people play games in prisons - cut their body and these things.

Research was done by many people. One of the best of Russian essay writers was Senesky, who made a speech on art, expression of individuality in the situation of absolute lack of freedom. He spent many years in prison himself. People who are in prison have no other way of expressing themselves than by cutting their own body.

C:And these people if they make themselves so secular by dressing this way immediately put themselves in the sub culture by just the way they look.

T:[redacted] example they are putting this fisherman's hook into their penises.

C:Not in the sub-culture, in prison (laughter)

K:But here we take heroin, or whatever it is.

C:The alien feeds on heroin and switches on at a certain point. There is nobody shooting up there so he wonders where to get it. There is a connection which is researched between....when we first got the idea it was just an idea, but they have printed something that there is a similarity. This opiate receptor receives this particular molecule.

K:It's not drugs, it is about being high. It is like in ancient Greek or Roman drama. Being very much in love, people can die; they are so much in love that they die finally. When you go to the peak of passion, it is also on the razor's edge of death. Passion can become death very easily, it is the same, just the other side of the coin, passion and death.

T:All the elements are not more than the normal elements of a fairy tale, a modern fairy tale. (Anne says she too was brought up on the fairy tale of Snow White). Today's legends are all the elements you can find in rock n roll songs — aliens, drugs, love.

C:I took them (parents from Connecticut) to see Montenegro to try and prepare them. They were really disgusted by it and wanted to know why I did it. They haven't seen Liquid Sky yet.

T:We already tried to show it in the most conservative suburb in America.....we found the place. 50 percent were absolutely shocked and hated it and 50 percent liked it. Some walked out. They were really disturbed. All of them disturbed.

Montreal Painter Su Schnee

FACING THE MONSTER

auto-portrait by Su Schnee

by JANET PIRIE

Su Schnee, not uncommonly, has been drawing for as long as she can remember. And she always knew she would want to draw all her life. As a very young child, she crayoned walls to such an extent that she was given part of the house that was hers to decorate.

Always precocious, she was hailed as a "child" prodigy in Spain in 1981—by then she was all of 21 years old, and the Vancouver native had just won the equivalent of $10,000 in an international drawing competition there.

To hear her tell it, she spent her entire school career learning about art; but she skipped classes most days. However, she loved learning whenever it was made challenging enough, though it seems she sometimes just got the extraneous stuff out of the way (finishing her Grade 12 mathematics courses while she was still in Grade Seven) so she could be left to her own devices.

As a child, she also wrote a lot— poems and stories—and then illustrated her work. Her first book, written for an English class when she was 10, was 200 pages long.

She grew up in a residence at Simon Fraser University. "I had the university as a huge playground and teacher. My mother had students as boarders, and they showed me things, took me to galleries, gave me magazines. I grew up seeing."

As a very young teen, Su stowed away in a neighbor's car to San Francisco. "I still don't know where I found the gumption." And her mother "in her wisdom" let her stay there with a trusted friend. San Francisco, where everyone was still wearing flowers in their hair, where so much of the experimentation (not just drugs and sex) and alternative art, music, politics, of that exciting period had their beginnings.

Her recognition in Spain brought her little in Vancouver. "Some people thought it was a fluke. Some of them were jealous. And since, coincidentally, I had just decided to move to Montreal, it looked as though I took the money and ran. I really felt guilty about that, even though I didn't actually get the money until much later. Then, I felt I was supposed to give it all away." (She did later send cheques to people who had helped her in the past, friends who were in need, and the gallery that had given her her first show.)

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"Future of an illusion" was the title of Su's most recent solo show. She designed a 6'x3.5' poster for it, and it went up around the city. "I was very excited by the large posters in Europe, and I was pleased with the graphic format of my own poster."

The "picture" part of the poster was done with blueprint materials, with the awareness that sunlight would bleach it, while the title was printed in permanent ink. Today you can find walls with large posters blank except for the red slogan "Future of an illusion." On one, which weathered all summer on St. Laurent, someone else has done a four-color spray painting.

The show dealt with playing with the monster within ourselves, or playing with the intelligence of the monster. Based on a series of posed photos, several smaller (3'x4') acrylic paintings, the heart of the show, illuminated the struggle.

"It was partly a self-portrait, but it was everybody's portrait. Within all of us there is turmoil, terror, dilemma. We constantly face the monster, provoking ourselves, seeking a solution or conclusion.

"There is a way of seeing its intelligence, rather than just confronting the monster. I'm not saying that by realizing this a solution is probable. But we all battle between good and bad within ourselves.

"There is guilt involved when we're not as beautiful, or as strong, or as good as we would like to be. And you can face the monster in an intellectual manner rather than just an emotional one; rather than just playing a role, the game can become intelligent.

"I guess it's an optimistic view of a pessimistic situation."

The show grew out of her own experiences and out of watching others go through difficult times. "It's a question of self-acceptance," she says.

"It's hard for me to find the words to explain why I did the work, which is partly why I had to paint it—but I don't like to use that cop-out, that 'my work should speak for itself'."

"It leaves a healing feeling. I didn't just want to do a frightening painting, though that's a very important part of art. The healer in me wants to create the balance, to find the passive part of the monster."

Su Schnee is known as a painter, as a photographer, and as a gallery owner (with Daniel Dion). She is a constant experimenter, a tryer of new ideas; her work often appears in art magazines, and you see it as well on posters, etc. all over the city. She is currently one of 62 artists exhibiting in *Montréal tout-terrain*, a show at 305 Mount Royal East until September 23.

The next show she is planning (though who knows what will happen before then?) is slated for Vancouver in the spring. She and Daniel Dion and their friend Linda Mansini will give a performance at the Western Front gallery, and Su will have a separate exhibition of her visual work.

"Future of an Illusion" in Montreal included, as well as the small paintings, a larger one and a drawing. When it moves to Vancouver, Su will add another large painting and several more drawings. The exhibition space there will be larger.

"But I may not use everything I take with me, or I might have to add something to it. I want to make the work fit the space; I like a room to feel unified.

"There have been some group shows recently where you walk in and think 'how big! how many! how crowded!' It hits you in the face with paint. But the thrill is short-lived. It's only sensational.

"The art market people have to create a new trend to make money, and right now there's a lot of high-production stuff around.

"I dislike the new fast work that we've seen such a barrage of from Toronto lately. I think the artists are sacrificing quality for quantity."

How did Oboro, her own gallery, come about?

"Daniel and I were sharing this 3000 sq.ft. space with friends, but eventually they moved on. There just wasn't enough privacy for any of us. So we wanted to do something great with the space while finding a way to pay the rent, and I suggested we start our own gallery.

"Daniel and our good friend Sylvain built a wall to separate the exhibition space from our living space, anr we got going.

"We wanted a space to exhibit art, non-commercial, not alternative, and different."

Where does the name Oboro come from, and what does it mean?

"It's a word that a friend made up and wrote on a T-shirt he gave Daniel as a gift. Later, I had an African dream in which the word was repeated. So we called Claude-Marie "Lasside" Caron, the fellow who invented the word, and got his permission to use it for the gallery."

Su puts a lot of time and energy into Oboro. "Daniel handles most of the the administrative and organizational side, while I deal more with the artistic aspects. But we share the social part of it."

Who were the people who were important in her development as an artist?

"My mother. My mother never said that I *had* to earn a lot of money, that I had to study a profession, that I should become a secretary or a doctor or a lawyer. She taught me to work hard, to be honest, to be kind. She always loved me, has always been proud of me, and wants photos of every single drawing or painting that I ever do."

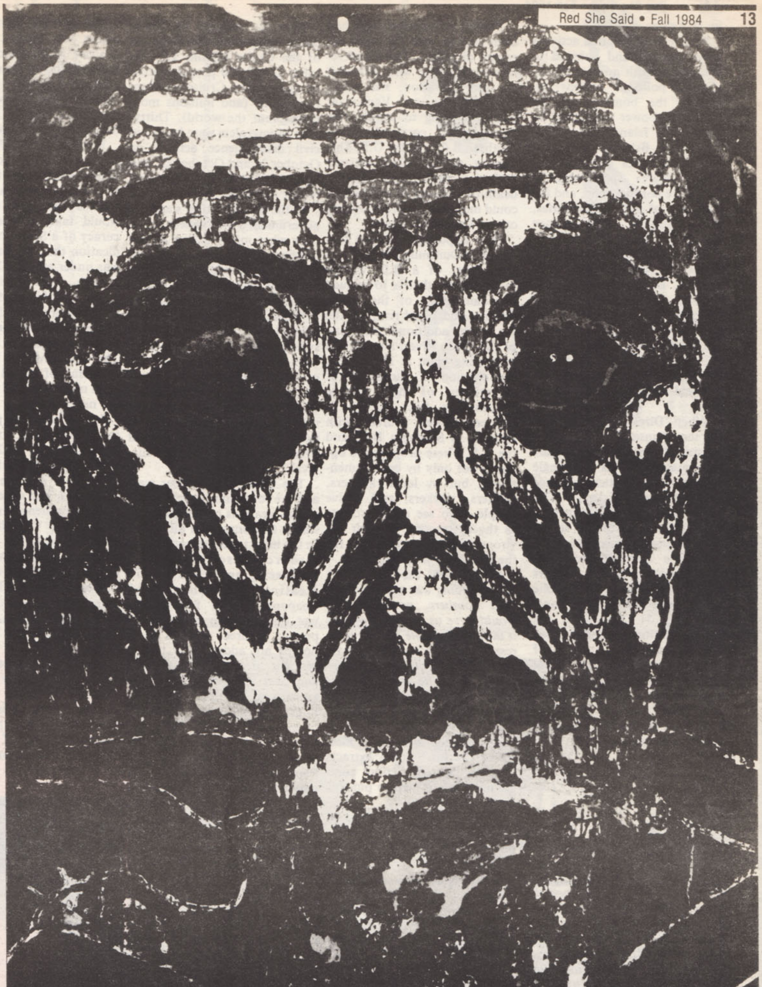
Who else?

"On the one hand, I never had any teaching. But there were always one or two who encouraged me to find my own way, who provided extra tools and added stimulation.

"A teacher in junior high named Mr. Stephenson, for one... But there was another teacher in senior high school who was so discouraging, who accused me of copying other pupils, who disliked me so much that he made me even more determined to become an artist."

Her first year after high school, Su attended Capilano College. Her painting teacher was the controversial Alan Wood. "His passion inspired me to explore, to work, to see what was magical. Alan doesn't know this, because we never talked much, or became close friends. But he used to get so excited, he used to shout at us to move our pencils, to think, to feel, to *do something*.

"My best friend at Vancouver School of Art, and still my best friend, Tracey Nelson. She and I used to be in the school after classes finished and work through the night, just the two of us and a fellow named Billy, usually. We'd build ceramic sculptures (Tracey does real *wild* ceramic stuff) and I worked harder because she was working so hard." [Tracey Nelson will have a show at Skol, 3981 blvd. St. Laurent, Suite 810, for two weeks following a Halloween vernissage and performance.]



[illegible] Huile sur papier [illegible] 1984

Oboro Gallery, where Su Schnee lives and works, is located in the Cooper Building on St. Laurent just below Duluth. If you've never checked the building out, you should. There's almost always something happening there.

The building is home to many artists and artistic endeavours, including two other galleries —Optica and Skol. The three artist-run spaces are not in competition, but cooperation.

The Cooper Building is in the process of changing from factory spaces to an artists' space. There is a tenants' association which deals with coordination of activities, and cooperation on events, and landlord problems.

The oldest of the "new" tenants in the building is Black Rose Books, a publisher of anarchist writings. Upcoming, an book by Noam Chomsky, another on the law and anarchism.

The newest tenant is P.R.I.M. video, not quite yet moved in.

Other tenants are Elite Productions, which is three people known in the theatre community as "the girls": Nadia Roma, Vera Miller and Rosina Bucci. They do casting for local movie productions as well as the nefarious "Snow Job" for CTV. (Want a job as an extra? Talk to Phyl, their assistant.) They have a theatre school and hold rehearsals for Les Masques dinner theatre, also their baby.

La Grosse Valise is another theatre group in the building. Like every other organization in the building, they have lots going on.

There are many private painting and sculpture studios, an architectural firm, a pianist. And there's Zibra, a typsetting and graphics firm that specializes in artistic endeavours—poetry books, other literature, art posters.

And there are dancers. Dancers abound. You get to feeling graceful just by walking through the lobby. There are Edouard Lock, Sylvie Panet-Raymond, Linda Mansini, to name just some. Their dance studios generally give classes as well as including rehearsal and limited performance space.

The building is currently undergoing a cleanup. A prospective landlord is painting it blue, white and yellow. Gone are the raggle-taggle of posters and notes from the walls, and one has the feeling of being in a swimming pool while walking down the hallways. But uniformity in the corridors is no clue to what is happening behind the doors in the individual spaces.

With the end of summer, activities are starting up again. There's a vernissage, or a performance, or a party, just about every night.

Sandra Prahara is another important figure. "I was living in a studio with no heat, no light, no running water, no toilet. And it was getting cold. Sandra left a note in my door one December day, because she had to move, too. We found a studio together, and a friend of hers gave her the application forms for an international drawing competition in Spain. We both submitted, and Sandra knew from the beginning that I would win.

"Just before the Spain news, Sandra and I had a very exciting exhibition together.

"One other person is Catherine McTavish, an artist whose work I admire, who provided me with support and consequent motivation. She was very open about saying that I was good, and would be recognized, in time, that I should just keep at it."

Where does she fit in the current Montreal art scene?

"Well, I like to think I'm unique. Everyone likes to think they instigate, not copy. I think a lot of the work around looks the same, and I choose not to work like that. Who knows what the critics call my work? But if someone calls me something that ends in *ist*, an abstract expressionist, I'm not going to feel that I have to continue to work in that style.

"Any label fits. I might fit into the avant-garde right now.

"My work is inside me. It belongs to me. Sometimes when I'm working it belongs not to me but to the work. It really isn't something I have control of all the time. It's magical. It's also hard work and discipline. It's expressing an identity. It's primitive."

What does Su Schnee have to say about her work and about her life in general?

"I don't paint to become a big, important artist. I paint for a handful of people who fall in love with my work. The question is not how many people, or how much money you can make.

"Will that handful grow? I don't know and I don't care. I just know that never will I let it (popularity, acceptance, praise) influence my work.

"I'm very young, but I will feel this way even when I'm 80. I do not ever disillusion myself that I know everything, do everything. Ignorance, though I'm not sure that's the right word, is not a bad thing.

"I draw every day. I have to draw every day, or I get sick. Drawings preclude the paintings, though in painting I feel there's an image inside you, you're the medium that translates the image.

"To be an honest artist—and consequently good—you must give it time to happen as it will. If one painting takes a year to finish (though I'm working on lots of other paintings at the same time), well, the painting needs that time to breathe. You cannot rush it.

"Integrity and clarity take time."

VANCOUVER 5: A Response to

by D.Azione

Five Vancouver area activists were arrested and charged in connection with a series of obviously political actions including the bombing of the Dunsmuir power substation on Vancouver Island, the **'Wimmin's Fire Brigade'** firebombings of a series of **'Red Hot Video'** stores specialising in hard core pornography, and the bombing of **Litton Industries**, the producer of guidance devices for Cruise Missiles.

That the state has found these 5 people, **Ann Hansen, Julie Belmas, Doug Stewart, Brent Taylor, Gerry Hannah** (aka **Gerry Useless - the Subhumans)** guilty does not change many of the fundamental issues at hand in these trials. The 5 are political prisoners and it was political resistance that was on trial.

When **'Direct Action'** bombed the Dunsmuir Substation, causing almost 6 million dollars in damages, it was the single greatest act of political sabotage in Canadian history. The Cheekye-Dunsmuir transmission line was a billion dollar project, meant to provide power from the mainland to Vancouver Island. In the 5 years between '77, when the public first became aware of the plans, and May 31 '82, when the 'Direct Action' bomb reduced the substation to a piece of useless metal sculpture, local people had organised to petition and lobby B.C. Hydro to prevent this project, and the ecological destruction it would entail, with no success.

Passive civil disobedience had been treated with the same arrogant disregard. The Cheekye-Dunsmuir power line, should it go into operation, will mean mass logging on Vancouver Island; logging to supply raw materials to corporations in southern B.C. and the U.S. This logging would entail massive ecological destruction and the death of millions of animals; it could mean the eventual logging out of Vancouver Island.

It is important to note that Cheekye-Dunsmuir is only a small part of a B.C. Hydro mega-project that is to include the damming of the Iskut, Stikine, and Liard rivers in the far north, additional damming of the Peace River, a coal-fired generating plant at Hat Creek, the erection of thousands of kilometres of high-voltage transmission lines needed to connect power sources with markets in Southern B.C. and the U.S. These projects are opposed not only by environmentalists, but by local ranchers, farmers, workers, and native people, who see these projects as the destruction of their environment and way of life for the benefit of high finance.

In this light the *'Direct Action bombing was not the act of mad bombers, as the media would have us believe, nor was it the act of people who have no respect for the powers that we call acceptable avenues of protest. It was the act of people who, having seen all else fail, saw no other option but to destroy the Dunsmuir substation before it destroyed Vancouver Island.'* Some extracts from the 'Direct Action' communique might help to put this in perspective:

'On May 31, we bombed the four 500kV transformers at the Dunsmuir substation on Vancouver Island. This substation is part of the $1 billion Cheekye-Dunsmuir transmission line project being built by B.C. Hydro. This project, if completed, will provide electricity for a wave of industrial development planned for Vancouver Island. We are opposed to any further industrial development and to any expansion of the power grid which will facilitate such development.

We reject both the ecological destruction and the human oppression inherent in the industrial societies of the corporate machine in the West and the Communist machine in the East. In the last two hundred years industrial civilization has been raping and mutilating the earth and exterminating other species at an ever accelerating rate. We say this is not right. Jobs, progress, standards of living - nothing is sufficient justification for the horrible damage being done.

Canada's historical role has always been that of supplier of cheap resources to the industrialized world. As this role becomes more critical internationally, the development of energy and resource megaprojects in Canada has become a government priority. As well as serving a strategic function within the international capitalist economy, the Canadian capitalists see these megaprojects as a means of overcoming the ongoing economic crisis nationally.

We must make this an insecure and uninhabitable place for capitalists and their projects. This is the best contribution we can make towards protecting the earth and struggling for a liberated society."

Literally millions of Canadians oppose the development of the Cruise Missile. On October 22, 30,000 people marched against the Cruise in Montreal alone (and millions more throughout the world). Thirty-nine Montrealers were busted in civil disobedience actions on October 24 and October 25, and hundreds were busted across North America.

In the face of Litton's and the government's willingness to ignore what might be the largest political protest in Canadian history, an armed attack is not an act of mad terrorism, but an expression of the desire to live.

'There is every reason imaginable to tear down the systems and makers of nuclear war: for the survival of all life on Earth, for all peoples' hopes and visions, for the possibilities of a livable future. We dedicate this action to the spirit of the people, which if awakened , will overcome the threats to our survival.'

The insanity of nuclear war, and the continuing development of the weapons of nuclear war, stands as a horror for all to see. In the industrialized world more resources, scientists and engineers are engaged in creating the armies and weapons systems for nuclear war than for any other single pursuit. Three to ten new bombs are added daily to the arsenals of global annihilation and over $300 billion is spent every year in increasing and upgrading an overkill stockpile of more than 55,000 weapons.

In the U.S., Reagan has asked for a 31% increase in the Pentagon's present $1.7 trillion five-year budget and also has a new $1.5 trillion arms program. Who can doubt that the dictators and militarists in the Kremlin are far behind.

The second 'Direct Action' action was against Litton Industries in Toronto. Litton is the well known producer of the guidance devices for Cruise missiles. The Cruise Missile is the most deadly first strike missile ever developed.

It will allow the U.S. to bomb Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in a matter of minutes. It is a weapon with a strike time that is less than the time it would take to check the accuracy of a Soviet computer indication that the Eastern block was under attack. During an 18 month period the North American Air Defense Command reported 151 false alarms. Soviet computers are known to be more primitive than ours. The Cruise Missile brings us to the brink of global destruction (that means me and you) even if it's never used.

In the two year period prior to the 'Direct Action' bombing on October 14, 1982, Litton Industries had been the target of many demonstrations, blockades, and other actions of civil disobedience. In the face of protest the Canadian government helped Litton produce the guidance system with a $23 million donation and a $26 million intrest free loan. In this light it came as no suprise when the former Trudeau government accepted the Cruise Missile tests in Canada.

Canadian economic, foreign and military policy is not committed to peace or global justice. Rather it is completely immersed within the genocidal nuclear strategy of the Western Alliance to wage nuclear war, if necessary, to maintain the multinational corporate economy throughout the world. Through membership in NATO and NORAD nuclear military alliances, the Canadian state is fulfilling an active support role in maintaining and developing the nuclear fighting capacity of the Western military forces. Primarily, Canadian support systems for nuclear war involve communication devices which supply targeting information to U.S. nuclear weapons systems or detection of incoming attacks; as well as the deployment of nuclear missiles at Canadian Forces bases at Bagotville, Quebec, at Comax, B.C., and at Chatham, New Brunswick. The ongoing complicity of the Canadian state with nuclear warfare strategists was re-affirmed recently by renewed committments to both NATO and NORAD, and by the government's support for NATO's nuclear modernisation program.

Hand in hand with the government's military involvement in the nuclear operations of NATO and NORAD, Canadian capitalists are making profits from producing components for U.S. nuclear weapons systems. Current government policy places no restrictions on Canadian industrial involvement in the building of U.S. nuclear weapons. Litton is building the Cruise Missile's guidance system, Hawker-Siddeley Canada Limited of Toronto is building launchers for the Lance Milliles designed to carry the Neutron Bomb, Vickers of

photo by Sylvain Lesperance

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Montreal is building the hull cylinder torpedo tubes for the Polaris, Poseidon and Trident nuclear submarines, Heede Internatinal of Port Moody, B.C. built the cranes to load nuclear warheads into the Trident subs, and a Canadian plant is working on a component for the MX nuclear missile system.

The Litton bombers have often been criticised for the 7 injuries caused by their bombs. In a second communique they except their part of the responsibility and explain the situation as they understand it. It is worth repeating for the record.

'We are very disturbed and saddened that the injuries occured as a result of this action. We have gone over what went wrong time and time again. Most significantly, the bomb exploded 12 minutes too early. But nevertheless, we feel we must strongly criticise the Litton security guards for the way in which they 'handled' this incident. We know that there were at least 3 security guards in the security booth when the van was parked and the telephone warning occured. We feel it is undeniable that all injury to the workers could have been avoided if the guards had promptly evacuated the Litton plant, as they obviously should have. Although we had no knowledge of the previous false bomb threats (in fact, we oppose the use of fake bomb threats precisely because they do cause the authorities to be skeptical of the authenticity of real bomb attacks), we put effort into making sure that the authorities would quickly understand that this threat was real. It is not as if we said that a pipe-bomb was hidden somewhere within the entire Litton complex, so evacuate everything. We informed Litton security of where the van and the box were. They were both completely visible to the guards simply by looking straight out through their booth's window, and the fact that they were there at all obviously indicated that something was amiss. We would like to know why the two other Litton guards were standing around on the front lawn, instead of informing workers in the other plants. As well, it is irresponsible of Litton to have never informed the workers of past bomb threats, and to not have a loudspeaker system combined with evacuation plans so that workers could be quickly moved to safety in the event of any danger, be it bombing or otherwise.'

Finally, 'Direct Action' make it clear that they aren't members of the legal peace movement.

'Finally, we wish to state that in no way was this bombing the work of the Cruise Missile Conversion Project, or any other public peace movement orginization in Toronto.'

The 'Wimmin's Fire Brigade' firebombings of 3 Red Hot Video hard core pornography stores on November 22, 1982 is tha last of 3 actions with which these 5 people were charged. Red Hot Video was the subject of several months of protest culminating in a week long vigil outside the store.

In spite of the fact that Red Hot Video was guilty of violations of the Criminal Code, selling exceptionally violent porn, the government refused to intervene. When they finally did, subsequent to the bombings, Red Hot Video recieved only token fines of several thousand dollars.

The Wimmin's Fire Brigade communique is exceptionally short and worth reprinting in total.

'We, the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, claim responsiblity for the firebombing of three Red Hot Video outlets in the Lower Mainland of B.C. on November 22, 1982. This action is another step towards the destruction of a business that promotes and profits from the violence against wimmin and children.

Red Hot Video sells tapes that show wimmin and children being tortured, raped and humiliated. We are not the property of men to be used and abused.

Red Hot Video is part of a multi-billion dollar pornography industry that teaches men to equate sexuality and violence. Although these tapes violate the criminal code of Canada and the B.C. guidelines on porography, all lawful attempts to shut down Red Hot Video have failed because the justice system was created, and is controlled by, rich men to protect their profits and property.

As a result, we are left no viable alternative but to change the situation ourselves through illegal means. This is an act of self-defense against hate propoganda. We will continue to defend ourselves.'

The Women's movement was quick to support these actions. The B.C. Federation of Women (a coalition of 36 groups) released a support statement:

'While we did not participate in the firebombings of November 22 in the Lower Mainland, we are in agreement with the frustration and anger of women who did.'

The Regroupement Feministe Contre la Pornagraphie (Feminist Coalition Against Pornography), a Montreal group, also supported the action:

'Firebombing shops selling pornographic videotapes might seem at first glance an inappropriate way to fight the violence against women. But things are not that simple. The violence that is used in an attack on private property is qualitatively different from the violence that is used in the videotapes aimed at, which glorify the rape, torture, and humiliation of women.'

It is also important to note that a second Wimmin's Fire Brigade communique claimed the innocence of the 5 people charged:

'Once again, we, the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, claim for the firebombing of three Red Hot Video outlets in the early hours of Mon. Nov. 22, '82. We are aware the police are charging 3 men and 2 wimmin, arrested the other week along the coast highway, with the anti-pornograpy actions.

It is necessary for us to say publicly that there is absolutely NO association between any of those five individuals they have behind bars now, and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade. We would obviously not be the Wimmin's Fire Brigade if there were men involved. Every one except the police seem to understand such basic logic. It is super-encouraging though, to see the positive response to our actions, by both men and wimmin.'

It is pernaps a sad indication of the state of affairs on the left in Canada that the general response to the 'Direct Action' bombings has been at best confused and at worst condemning. The anti-nuclear and ecological movements have done their best to put as much distance between theselves and these actions as possible. Other sections of the left, including most strains of anti-authoritarianism, have not been much better.

One of the most common critiques is that the bombings were violent, and violence begets violence. The bombing of Dunsmuir was a nightime attack on an isolate power station (the closest peron was over a mile away). It was the destruction of a piece of property that was to further destroy our already critically damaged ecosystem, cause the death of many thousands of members of other species, and ultimately speed up the destruction of the entire planet. It was not a terrorist act, it was an act of revolutionary self-defense.

The Litton bombing seems rather straight forward to me. The Cruise missile is the highest development of techno-death. This weapon makes the nuclear destruction of the world not only possible, but almost unavoidable. Any attack against this tool of madmen bent on destroying the entire world if they can't own it all must be supported. I don't know about you, but I want to live!

To be continued next issue

photo by Peter Sandmark

State Violence. Part 1: The Issues

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[redacted]

Madness and Widgets: A Sci Fi Political Allegory

by Matthew Taylor

Labyrinthine sentences. Sententious labyrinths. Strange words tapping like a blind man's stick. Who would dare to write a book such as ***Where I Stand — hymn to freak illusion, horror house of eternal yawns, a necrophiliac narrative drooling on the dead paradox? What author could grunt and whisper and orate with this stench of rabies, research and development? Only the crown prince of the inside out, the mad hatter of science fiction: only Brian Mulroney.***

There is no question about it. Mulroney, the long-neglected master of the fantastic, has emerged from the fringe.

When **One Night Stand on Aldebaran** was first published in 1959, the young writer received nothing but scorn from science fiction critics and nothing at all from science fiction readers. No one understood his book. The fantasy novel chronicled the struggles of a family of aliens vacationing in a galaxy overwhelmed by unions and ineptitude. "It was a meditation on my own life" Mulroney explains, "my early experiences growing up as the son of an electrician in Baie Comeau, Canada. If you look beyond the science fiction, you'll find a very human novel."

But in 1959 the work fell on deaf ears. It departed from the prevailing fashion for apocalyptic adventure-allegories. Moreover, Mulroney was burdened by his reputation as a hack contributor to the pulp magazine **Beyond**. "I wrote those stories to survive. I was working on an assembly line manufacturing American flags and writing late at night, trying to scrape up enough money to pay back my student loan and still get by. It was a very lonely time for me."

Since then Mulroney has come far. His second novel, **Captain Handshake**, garnered minor acclaim and helped build a small but loyal readership. In quick succession followed **Transaction Zone, The Bald Spot**, and **Fate's Chauffeur** — all remarkable and still underestimated books, overshadowed as they are by his extraordinary bestselling trilogy, **Planet Bland**. It was **Planet Bland** that cemented Mulroney's reputation. Without sacrificing his devotion to the illusory, the impossible and the nonexistent, Mulroney swayed reviewers and sci-fi fans alike. The trilogy won the Hugo and Nebula awards. The author's name became a household word.

And now Mulroney has given us a new novel.

Where I Stand, a boldly experimental work, might best be described as an empty stare translated into English. It unveils for us a universe where people look without seeing, speak without thinking, and consume without looking at the price tag.

The story begins on Gavel, a planet tranquilized by the thought of continuity. In order to avoid the slightest disruption, the inhabitants of Gavel program automatons to teach them what they already know. But one of the Gavelians, Ridge, experiences a vision. A set of perfectly straight teeth urges him to travel across the galaxy in pursuit of a mysterious goal: "It comes down to this: Canadians must be encouraged to research and develop the most useful widget in the world. It must of high quality. It must be cheaper than widgets produced elsewhere. To the extent possible, it should be an attractive, salable commodity."

Acting on the instructions of the enigmatic dentures, Ridge constructs a spaceship that runs on the power of traditional statements repeated over and over. Christening his vehicle **The Productivity Commission**, he sets off in search of the widget. But before he gets out of his own galaxy Ridge finds himself confronted by an evil interplanetary network: "The Canadian postal system has to be one of the worst in the civilized world. Its record is a litany of wildcat strikes, violence, interrupted service, and costly overruns." After defeating the Postal System's kingpin in a game of curling, Ridge dismantles the band of villains and discovers the whereabouts of the widget by reading the private correspondance of an entire nation. The widget, we learn, dwells in the most important part of the entire universe: "The motor of the mixed economy is the private sector. It must be kept running at all times."

At this point the novel changes. As Ridge heads for the Private Sector, Mulroney's depiction of existence becomes more and more bizarre. Contradictory narratives compete for our attention. Meaningless sentences assault us. Nonsense words are strung togethor for no apparent reason. "As we contemplate the sad state of this splendid nation, we search for reasons why things are as they are. One major reason is that we have a federal government committed to a socialist democratic-collectivist philosophy. There is no room in its vocabulary for words like risk, sacrifice, reward, initiative, enterprise, and profit."

Some how (we are left guessing) the cloud affects Ridge. He becomes less amiable, more adamant. His goal seems more and more ambiguous. He wanders through his spaceship giving speeches about the same three things: "good laws", "ordinary Canadians", and "my father". By the end of part three Perfunct is given to fits of psychotic histrionics: "For twenty years, Canada has seen a growth and style of government which has led to more and more intervention. Rather than bringing the country togethor and building prosperity, this record of intervention has dampened the spark of private initiative and divided the country. The task before us will be a big one. We must create new conditions that will encourage private sector initiatives, which in turn will ensure Canada's future."

Where I Stand is a disturbing and elusive novel, becoming more and more bewildering as it reaches its close. True to his characteristic style, Mulroney unflinchingly reveals in the final chapters that much of what he has written is not true. As we read we experience the delicious sensation of those who walk on thin ice: that nothing is to be trusted.

Of course, Mulroney's detractors will find plenty to attack in this deliberate sabotage of narrative logic and clarity. But what they fail to understand is that Mulroney writes from the world of rhetoric, and his vision is of an unending terrain within the mind upon which smooth words play hide and seek. When Ridge abandons his quest for the widget and spirals through the universe misquoting lines from the novel's early chapters, it is the exploration of an essential Mulroney idea: that things can be said and then unsaid, true and then untrue, depending on the time, the place, and the convenience.

Where I Stand ends with a crescendo of false logic, cozy sayings, and vague imperatives. The result is dazzling. Dazzling and, in the best Mulroney manner, completely inexplicable. Subverting the very idea of real ideas, Mulroney offers in their place a fusion of blind adherence to old conventions and lip service to new ones. Thus the climactic and seminal passage, intoned by Ridge as he prostrates himself before the great computer at the heart of his majestic spaceship: "The talent and wisdom in the Conservative caucus and Party are not to be underestimated. When confronted with a grave problem they are capable of appropriate remedial action. It is important to all of us that they address this problem in an urgent and sustained manner. We know there are no simple solutions."

Brian

Insults on the installment plan

Theatre Shmeatre talks about actors, critics, and other cretins...

This is the first installment of Theatre Shmeatre's insults to Canadian culture.

Except for government bureaucrats and intellectuals no one is viewed with so much disappointment by most Canadians as the theatre actor. Everyone makes faces. Everyone acts up. But the theatre actor has a peculiar problem. She/He is in the theatre.

Positioned, as we are, up the the asshole of Montreal theatre, Theatre Shmeatre enjoys a priveleged point of view on the subject.

Despite their pretentions you can't miss two hallmarks of the theatre actor. The first is arrogance. The second, stupidity. Both of these ''motivations'' (in Theatrespeak) work in perfect harmony in the little fat happy theatre hierarchy in Montréal.

The theatre attracts people whose concept of the dramatic originates solely in their excitement over an inflating vision of themselves. Actors aren't ones to leave a talent unexploited.

An actor's mindlessness is carefully brought out and nurtured in his or her relationship with directors. Their treatment is identical to treatment of schoolchildren by teachers — lots of authority, condescension and continuous manipulation. They gleefully undergo this abuse for they will soon (they hope) be fanatically appreciated by blubbering audiences. Theatre is the case of someone getting a big prize for no reason at all. So reasons have to be invented. (note: see theatre critics). Who would not try to enhance their own vacuousness?

Actors are rewarded for being told what to think, what to look like, where to be, how to be, just about everything about existing except ''what to feel'', whatever that means. If we were describing a **Burger King** cashier's attitude towards her/his job, you would say ''what an idiot.'' We are not talking about a Burger King cashier, we are talking about a theatre actor, a fine artist.

But why just insult actors? They do not run theatres. It's obvious. If actors did run the theatres they would only do plays written about themselves. You can't always get what you want. Attending most plays in English Montreal is the same as walking into an emotion soufflé. These days (and in the clogged toilet of the theatre world these days pass very slowly) Montreal's big directors are obsessed with quick preparation ready-digestible Naturalism-Realism-Televism — T.V. dinner drama which they serve in full ''variety.''

The recipe is simple. A likeable character. Several less likeable characters. A pinch of adultery, a dash of offstage fucking, and just a hint of latent homosexuality. Pour into setting suggesting British aristocracy or the Great War (the World Wars are the greatest source of inspired passion in the theatre). Bring to crisis and wait for applause. Serve in a fancy container six or seven times a season. It's been a favourite with the upper class for more than a century.

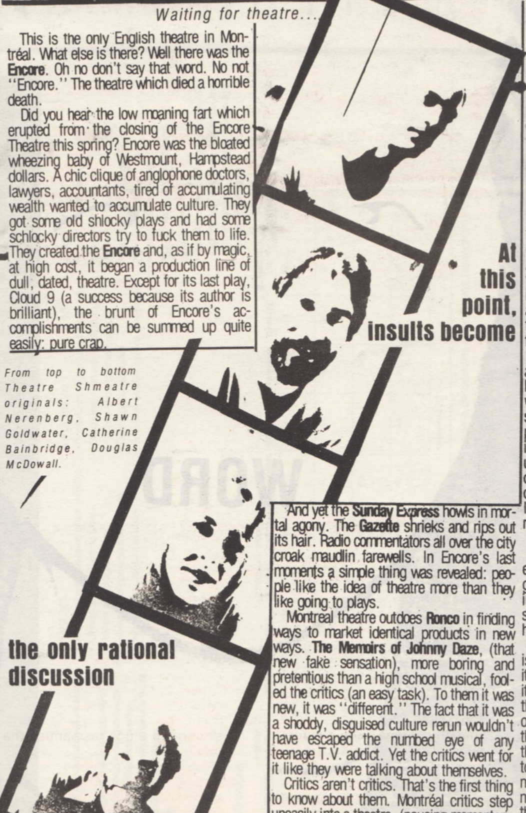
Take Montreal's **Centaur Theatre**. The lonely big fat fish in the Montréal anglo stagnant art pond. What do we find here? The competing cliques of desparate clandestine theatre fanatics? Pushy financiers doting over coming productions? Canadian government inspectors making sure their funds turn into properly homogenised culture? No. Better. We find all of this together in one man. Meet the Montréal theatre establishment. **Maurice Podbrey**. He's the friendly gentleman who cooks up the the nice Centaur menu every season.

''We'll we got melodrama on special today, if you don't mind waiting we got classics, and as usual today's Politique du jour is South African.''

Waiting for theatre...

This is the only English theatre in Montréal. What else is there? Well there was the **Encore**. Oh no don't say that word. No not ''Encore.'' The theatre which died a horrible death.

Did you hear the low moaning fart which erupted from the closing of the Encore Theatre this spring? Encore was the bloated wheezing baby of Westmount, Hampstead dollars. A chic clique of anglophone doctors, lawyers, accountants, tired of accumulating wealth wanted to accumulate culture. They got some old shlocky plays and had some schlocky directors try to fuck them to life. They created the **Encore** and, as if by magic, at high cost, it began a production line of dull, dated, theatre. Except for its last play, Cloud 9 (a success because its author is brilliant), the brunt of Encore's accomplishments can be summed up quite easily: pure crap.



From top to bottom Theatre Shmeatre originals: Albert Nerenberg, Shawn Goldwater, Catherine Bainbridge, Douglas McDowall.

At this point, insults become the only rational discussion

And yet the **Sunday Express** howls in mortal agony. The **Gazette** shrieks and rips out its hair. Radio commentators all over the city croak maudlin farewells. In Encore's last moments a simple thing was revealed: people like the idea of theatre more than they like going to plays.

Montreal theatre outdoes **Ronco** in finding ways to market identical products in new ways. **The Memoirs of Johnny Daze**, (that new fake sensation), more boring and pretentious than a high school musical, fooled the critics (an easy task). To them it was new, it was ''different.'' The fact that it was a shoddy, disguised culture rerun wouldn't have escaped the numbed eye of any teenage T.V. addict. Yet the critics went for it like they were talking about themselves.

Critics aren't critics. That's the first thing to know about them. Montréal critics step uneasily into a theatre, (pausing momentarily to have the theatre manager or play director (or both) lick her/his asshole ceremoniously. Don't worry the critic returns the favour when the review is published. We see the two fall into a 69 position projecting new sexy culture organs onto eachother and sucking with style and grace.) The critic walks in, squints at the lights, picks at her/his seat, and finally jerks a head up to check the atmosphere for air-conditioning. Theatre critics are masters at finding glory in mediocrity, high drama in racism, tender moments in sexism and dignity in deadness. These are paid fetishists. They are designed to have popular traditional fixations — avoiding the future, avoiding unpleasantness, cementing contradictions in life into monuments to be glorified sentimentally. When the people can't tell what they're consuming anymore the critic is equipped with a preprogrammed fancy for that which is ''different.''

A critic declaring a play ''true'' as opposed to ''false'' faithfully bears out all the axioms of modern marketing research. An irrational market distaste for playright A (**Edward Albee** maybe) complements a love for playright B (**Beckett** perhaps). But the theatre critic will always remind you that she/he is always looking beyond any single performance:

The theatre critic's sololiquy:

''Sometimes the world looks grey to me. Everything seems the same to me. I can't even remember the plays I see. (chuckles wryly.) So I just sit and I wait. And then I hope. (pause) I hope for something different. I hope for something truly different and very unique. Something truly different different, very unique and above all original. Oh it's useless. I wait in vain.

''Then suddenly. There is a stirring. A uniqueness moves like a breeze. And behind it, like an original avant garde trend, a wave picks up. It shines with a mystifying difference in the distance. I have a strange feeling. The wave moves forward. Yes, it is moving towards me. I have been chosen. I move to face it. The audience waits faithfully behind me. A secret fear building in their throats, and they are united as a mass, in a single repressed gasp.

''Then! The wave rears up before me. It is towering above in the follow-spot lights. I am entranced. For a moment all action is still. And there is silence. There is just the frozen wave and I am staring at my own reflection in a never-ending never-beginning wall of applause. Ancient waters come together in the deep. Truth suddenly bursts upwards in fountains spraying the message of the ''good ole days'', the glory of ''the way it always will be.'' It's the big antique sale of life. And all the wave is sweeping over me, washing all the rabble back. Back into their suburbs their duplexes, their unions, their punk music, back into their feminism, back into the middle ages. And I feel myself lifted up into a sky raining great scripts. And suddenly I'm on my feet. I'm **Ackerman**. I'm clapping. Im **Schnurmacher**. I'm Calling. I'm **Galloway**. I'm coming. I am filler for the movie ads.''

And so the story goes. Night after night of endless repitition, nostaligia, encores, the good ole days, bringing it all back, only now in new Intensurround and Grand Moment-stereo. And so theatre moves forward its head up its asshole.

But above all theatre is distinguishing. It is distinguishing for the people who finance it, distinguishing for the people who perform it, distinguishing for those who see it. That's the big idea. To distinguish yourself from other people. For those outside the theatre the goal is to distinguish yourself as a theatregoer. For those in theatre the goal is to distinguish yourself right to the top. And maybe someday distinguish yourself into immortality. Together they will distinguish themselves to infinity.

People of meaningless distinction. Consumers who enjoys the package more than the product. But producers confidently dispense the product. And that product grows with the energy of mold.

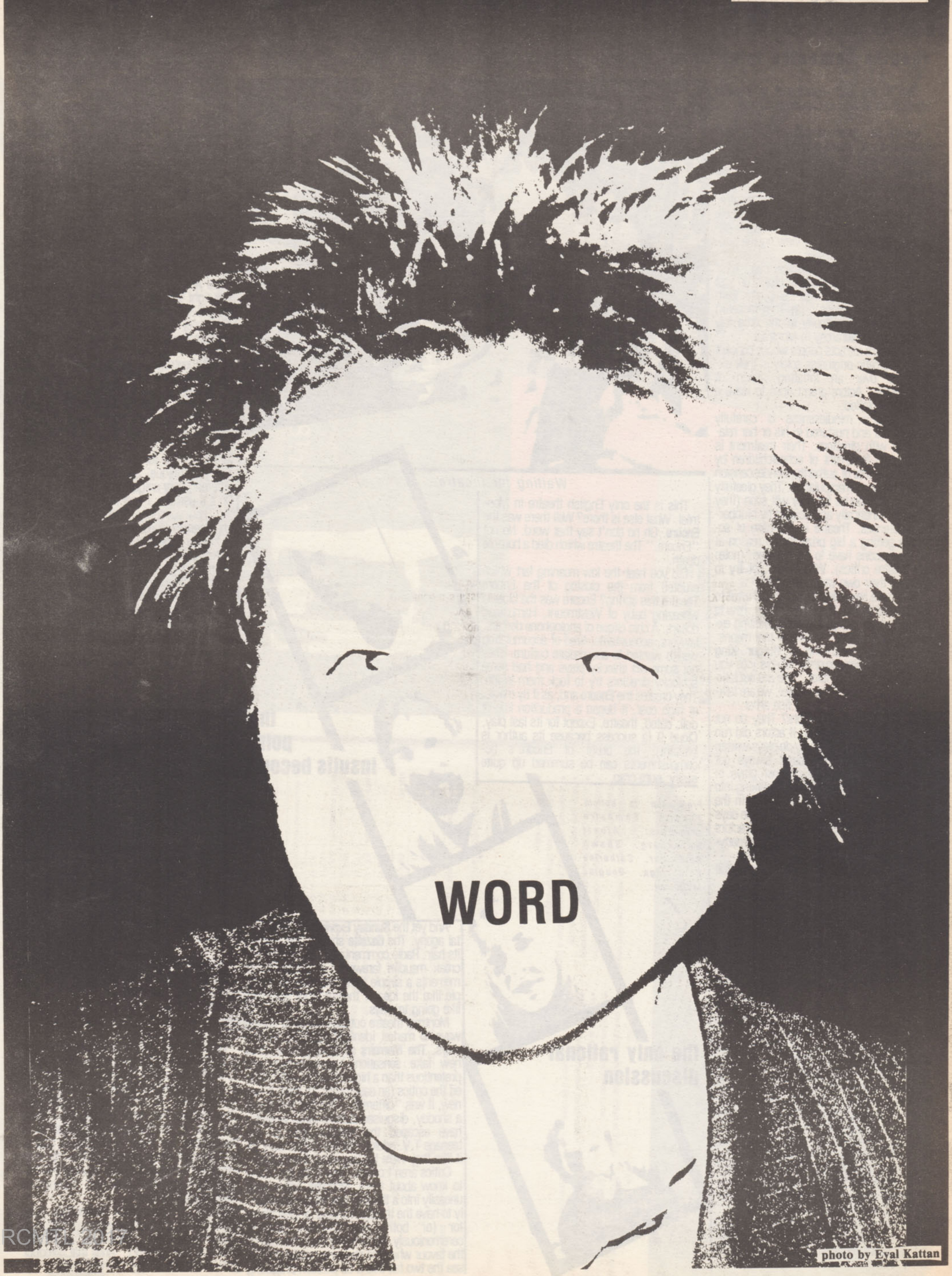


photo by Eyal Kattan

ARCMTL 2017

by Richard McCallum

This interview was conducted during the 1981 edition of the Montreal World film festival, where **Liquid Sky** *won a special jury award.* **Liquid Sky** *is an interesting film because of the people who made it; Russian dissidents, and a stellar cast of some of New York City's most talented and unknown acting talents. David Lake and I, interviewed Slava Tuskerman,* **Liquid Sky's** *director and co-writer along with co-producer Nina Kerova and Ann Carlisle who both collaborated with Tuskerman on the script, in a suite at the Hyatt Regency that for some reason was infested with small spiders.*

This article was originally commisioned by **Impulse** *magazine in Toronto, a small international quarterly headed by the infamously outrageous Eldon Garnet, who was very interested in publishing a piece on such a unique film. However, after delivering this article to them, Lake and I were severely dissapointed to learn that the* **Impulse's** *'editorial board' decided not to publish it because of it's 'controversial nature'. Since then I have watched film critics internationally discover this fine film (and subsequently pan it), all the time waiting for the golden moment when I would be able to publish this provocative interview, now that moment is here. I hope that you enjoy it.*

Liquid Sky is a pseudoneum for the white opiate of death — heroin, it is also the title of a startling new film that is threatening to become as cultishly fasionable as the **Rocky Horror Picture Show.** It is a nightmarish vision of Manhattan, and the no-holds-barred lifestyles of punks and junkies, the negative boys and girls who go to sleep praying that they will be spared the glaring harsh light of reality. **Liquid Sky** shows us the nightclub that is a Brechtian merry-go-round, where the calliope never grinds to a halt, but when it does — so does the will to live.

The film opens with a techno-pop fashion show at a seedy Manhattan club. Models writhe on the floor. The dominant theme is 'Inferno'. As the show gains an almost sickening momentum, an Unidentified Flying Object glides down from the stars and lands on a model's penthouse apartment. The Model's name is Margaret (Ann Carlisle). She is a Princess without a prince.

The alien has an unusual reason for visiting earth. It is an intergalactic junkie with an insatiable thirst for heroin. It does not use a syringe. There is another unusual twist. The alien also feeds on the human's physical and mental reaction to the sexual orgasm. When a couple is in the heat of sexual stimulation, they get zapped as our strange little hero consumes a quick fix. But our mysterious visitor from outer space is not the only character in **Liquid Sky** that fixes up more than once a day.

After the fashion show Margaret invites male model Jimmy (also Ann Carlisle) back to her penthouse for a cold sexual encounter, much to her dismay she discovers that Jimmy would much rather mainline some good 'H' than pretend to enjoy sex.

They fight over a white dress, and after the near brain-dead Jimmy completely dessimates Margaret's apartment for smack, the two head back to the club.

The next sequence finds punk princess Margaret being force-fed Quaaludes and raped by a young soap star; all this in the first fifteen minutes. But enough of **Liquid Sky's** unique and daring plot line, if you want to know what this one is about, you'll have to pay five bucks .

Though **Liquid Sky** is an American film, it is also an international production. Slava Tsukerman, the director and one of the three co-writers of the film has had a distinguished career in Russia. He was privileged to study under legendary cinematic mastermind Professor Lev Kuleshov at the Moscow Film Institute (VGIK). In 1970, Tsukerman's short film **Professor Alexander's Discovery** received the USSR's highest award.

The last film Tsukerman completed in his native country was the 20 minute short film **Night For Descision, a philosophical piece dealing with the problem of freedom of will. This controversial short was subsequently banned in Russia, smuggled out of the country and eventually shown at Los Angeles' Filmex, and internationally, to popular acclaim.**

Nina Kerova, associate producer and co-writer, also attended the Moscow Film Institute where she studied script writing and cinema criticism. Kerova also studied theatre direction at the Moscow Institute of Culture, and has worked extensively in Russian theatre, television and film production, as an actress, writer, assistant director and producer.

But Liquid Sky is carried by the stunningly exotic Ann Carlisle who also co-wrote the screenplay with Kerova and Tsukerman and provides a remarkable dual portrayal of Margaret and Jimmy. Born in Connecticut and a graduate of New York's School of Visual Arts, Carlisle studied acting at the Robert Brady Studios, along with video art, holography, sculpture and painting. Her modelling career at NYC's avante-garde modelling agency La Rocka, aided her greatly in the research for Liquid Sky .

Now, the interview......

Carslisle: Relationships between men and women are very volatile at the moment. A lot of things have changed very fast. Women suddenly said, 'You guys fucked us over', right. They are the hardest women that ever lived. They call themselves 'negative girls'. They do it very beautifully, but they are evil.

In Margaret's case she goes through all the motions, she knows all the people, but she isn't always looking for someone. She even finds the alien to be responsible. Margaret is in the context of 'negative girls' so she thinks she is like them.

Kerova: Men don't know who they are because they are pressured to be cocks. And, women are pressured to be passive. People are mixed up and suffering from the pressures of society. They are trapped.

In Egypt's society, you don't see boys and girls together until they are 18. You see men walking in the street hand-in-hand and looking happy. I asked them, 'What is that. You have open homosexuality here.' They said 'Sure. Until 18.' After 18, no way. If you don't have children after you are 18 you are bad. In the villages they cut your cheek if you are still homosexual.

C: All of us are bisexual, even though we may not want to face it. That's the point of the film.

T: I want to stress that sexuality is not the main message of the film, though. What is said may be true, but it is not exactly the point I'm trying to make.

Red She Said: What was it like to play the role of a male and female at the same time.

C: An actor or actress playing a man and a woman is done all the time in Japan - - the Kabuki theatre. It is an important exercise for any actor. It helps make you understand how people tick. It is very different to have an inner monologue between a man and a woman. I found the experience mystical. Sometimes I didn't control it. When I became Jimmy it stayed like that and I didn't have to think about it.

This happened to me before the movie, by the way. I did that study of androgyny and I went as far as I went in the film. Then it became something a little more frightening. When I was a feminine girl I cut off all my hair and went through a period where I eliminated all my feminine characteristics.

T: The first day we made the decision that Anne would play two parts we put male things on her and the three of us went to a club. She was picking up a woman at the bar who thought she was a man.

RSS: Why was your film **Night For Decision banned in the USSR.**

T: It was a twenty minute short about the freedom of will. It was the same type of thing as **Liquid Sky** technically - one actor playing two parts. The actor was one of Russia's biggest stars. It was banned because there is no such program as freedom of will in Russia.

It starts with a person coming

ARCMTL 2017

RSS When you say what you are doing is throwing something into the works, are you dealing in shock value?.

js No, it's not shock value. I am pretentious enough to think there is some theoretical worth in Resisting the Pharoahs. It takes on the experimental tradition of filmaking, one which is narcasistic, bent inwards and autobiographical. And also the structuralist approach to experimental film — it ruptures all of those traditions — it uses content as a means to subvert and integrate the past. The film shows there is a great deal of countersurveillance on the part of the left which is not going to be easily intimidated. It says, look you bastards, you motherfuckers aren't going to be able to obscure everything. We are able to leak into your own system and also pull out your own telexs. These things are put on to celluloid to generate some sort of discourse...If it isn't the right time to throw bombs the least we can do is physchological torture. Indict people.

RSS So the thing you are working towards is an intellectual awareness, not active political revolt, ie strikes?

JS One film that is politically interesting will always yeild another one. For example I know filmmakers who are five or ten years younger than me, who because of seeing the things I am doing may perhaps try to integrate the issues I deal with into their own work.

RSS Doesn't that limit it to that form? It doesn't provoke direct action, it limits it to cultural expression.

JS Cultural activity is political action. **RSS** I agree that cultural action is political action in a very broad sense. However, the cultural ghetto functions as a safety valve for the disenchanted, discouraged, political activist who has given up. A sort of co-optation by the system. You are allowed this cultural freedom because we are living in this so-called free society and the cultural ghetto is as far as the freedom extends.

JS I have experienced no freedom in my film-making at all. I have received six rejections from the Canada Council, three from the Institut de Cinema Quebec. I am trapped I have to live on welfare and because I made one political film, **Dictators**, the council cut me off altogether. So much for the freedom we all talk about. Part of **Resisting the Pharoahs** is to make you aware that you are not free. You are slaves in this society, this society which lives on the blood of others.

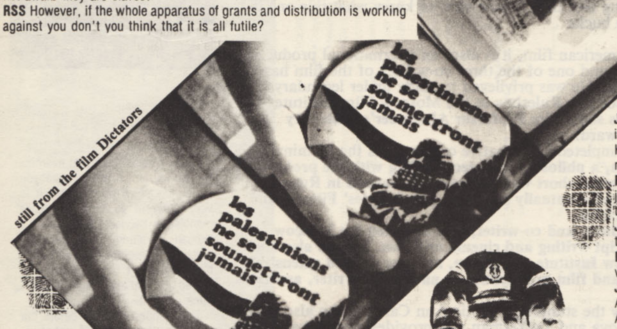
JS What about the freedom to make films like **Resisting the Pharoahs**?

JS Sure, I have manufactured a film. But potentially what is my distribution? Independents like me will have really marginal distribution, does that represent freedom?

RSS There are many formalist independent filmakers that have the same problems with distribution you have and they don't represent any threat to the system.

JS No. But their careers are aggrandised by the cultural institutions. They at least can get 15 to 16,000 dollar grants. If they were to make political statements, like about the way the bastard Levesque has sucked off the Popes ass, they would not get grants. They don't know that they are slaves, by and large. I come from an artsy background myself: they are not aware they are slaves.

RSS However, if the whole apparatus of grants and distribution is working against you don't you think that it is all futile?


still from the film Dictators
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Resisting the Pharoahs uses relations which aren't predictable, which become a metaphor for what one ought to do in real life. One ought to examine what the traditional apparatus means in terms of an ideological apparatus.

JS No. There is such a thing called *Liberal Guilt*, which one can hope to exploit. By and large the buffooons at the Cinema Council do not know they do an incredible ammount of damage. Recently the bread riots in Costa Rica...

RSS In Tunisia, Morrocco...

JS There is an international link, Canadian money pays for these things. I needn't mention the case of CIDA, a Canadian CIA type of organisation, which has ravaged the fuck out of Haiti.

RSS But the thing that I would argue is the problem with your films is they are appealling to a bunch of people who wouldn't know the first thing about CIDA.

JS Well the next time I make a film I will try to explain it to them. I can't cover the entire universe in one blow.

RSSno1 But you can't give a political apparatus within a framework which appeals only to a very Avant-garde artsy type, the understanding isn't there. And that is why I think a Film like Dictators, the one you did two years ago works, it works on an emotional level.

RSSno2 On the other hand, it can also be written off, you don't have to look very far for meaning, it is not a very challenging film.

It says look you bastards, you motherfuckers, you aren't going to be able to obscure everything. These things are put on celluloid to provoke discourse...if it isn't the right time to throw bombs the least we can do is psychological torture.

JS But that works to my advantage as well, because one of the chief aims is to atagonise and to polarise. If you can't make the connection between Helmut Kohl and the ravage of Africa, then I think that I would rather you resent me.

RSS But Julian, you don't even go as far as making that connection, you just put these people up as icons to be destroyed. They can be replaced, they are just the visible leaders of this entire system.

JS It is not as unanalytical a film as one might think. A closer reading of the film reveals this.

RSSno1 No. I think it is good because it operates on a general level as well, and if the purpose of the films is to politisise that is important.

JS It is a very traditionally made film, it goes back to the style of Santiago Alvarez, from 1967. You see that there is a definite kind of link. North American pop music is butchered and shattered with these correllative overtly political images.

JS In Canadian political life there is always an attempt to launder the political message. Take a look at a ridiculous political institution like Open City. Its target aim was to rupture the Montréal beurocracy, but it has become a wimped out rag, you have seen how they sell the flesh of women and men in that magazine. This is what the harder generation of politicals have to do. They have to battle with these people, and as you can see it is desperately frustrating. Because there are a lot of happy people out there, you know. Those who do take risks are labelled as extremists.

RSS What about that? Praxis?

JS I don't want to forecast anything but I think it will be sudden. We never before in human history have secreted imperialist empires such as the one that we live in now. The repressive apparatus here, the police forces, the media, it is combatting these two Pharoahs that will be the lynchpin here. We can go on talking progressive, the media will give us a channel. This allows the system to marginalise, contain and co-opt. But okay, look, on this problem we have to examine the forces of progress. Take the example of the Rainbow Coalition, and if it wins, if it goes to its maximum, what it will secrete is a Jesse Jackson. Now will the system surrounding him allow him to cut links with South Africa, Israel? What we have to rely on are revolutions in the Third World. We are, in any sense of the word, in a state of decline, the Empire is crumbling.

ARCMTL 2017

Revolution on a Reel

Montreal Filmaker Julian Samuel on 'Combatative Film'

by Karen Bastow and Eyal Kattan

RSSJulian, I would like to know what you consider to be the purpose of your films?

JS The purpose of the films is to inform people. Let's talk specifically about the one I am working on now, **Resisting the Pharoahs**. It's about 35 minutes long and I started it a year ago. Basically it was a response to a fairly large pseudo-progressive community, the Disarmament movement. I thought perhaps one way to politicise this movement, since it has no real sincere politics as such (it just has a ''let's save our silver Barbeques attitude'' about it), would be to make a film that could be used by the disarmament movement. The film would have within it, firstly, a critique of the media: what the media does to sabotage our lives in North America; and what the media does to sabotage the lives of *millions* of Third World people. Secondly, I thought that if I could integrate a progressive understanding of the relationship between Third World exploitation, the arms industry and the protection of what one may call, historically, ''the silk groups'', one could try to politicise the disarmament movement.

RSS You are saying you were aiming for this specific group, the disarmament movement, and you were not trying to appeal to any broader audience?

JS No, not altogether. When I show my films I can never really tell what type of audience will be there. Usually it's artsies, and pseudo-progressives who think perhaps politics and radical chic might be an interesting thing to do. To see their consciousness on the screen, works perhaps as an affirmative action.

RSS Do you really think you have any effect on exactly that group of people?

> *When I show my films I can never be sure what type of audience will be there. Ussually it is the artsies, the psuedo-progressives who think perhaps politics and radical chic might be an interesting thing to do.*

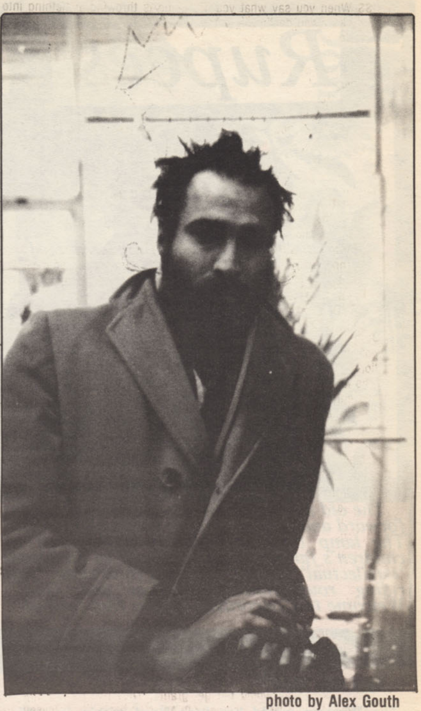


photo by Alex Gouth

JS The form I have used in this later film is much more communicative than my earlier stuff, it's not as 'experimental' as it used to be, it is not as infested with an examination of the internal dynamic of film. It is more interested in the political relation of the ruling classes to the oppressed, even the oppressed in this society here, which I think are like the oppressed in many other parts of the world. India, for example, is a country where the oppressed are lulled to sleep by the chants of the mosque, by Hindu religion, by other reactionary forms of religious abeyance. Resisting the Pharoahs makes those sorts of connections.

My target aim was to rupture the relationship or to try to analyse the relationship between religion, subordination and ideology inculcated into the minds of North Americans. Blinding Ideology.

RSS Don't you think that the type of films you are making and the type of audience you are appealing to function as a cultural ghetto, ie, as a safety valve for the same extensive control of the media you are talking about?

JS In one deep sense I disagree with you. That is tantamount to saying you are already preaching to the converted. I always say, **what converted?**, if there were a converted in this soviety, they would be trying their best to...

RSS I am not saying you are preaching to the converted (that is another point we can take up later). What I was suggesting was the existence of the cultural ghetto functions as safety valve.

JS The cultural ghetto only functions to have its own mirror image reflected on the screen. I think that reinforcement of any attitudes of opposition that might be in the cultural ghetto, as you like to call it, might be a step in the right direction. I am absolutely sabataged by the hollywood industries, by the bourgeois nationalist Quebec industries, to some extent the film board I guess, although they have shown a little bit of sympathy this time around. The domination of the mode of distribution and the mode of production is in the hands of Hollywood. With them impregnating their own messages with racism, sexism, and imperialist domination, there is little room for me to operate, and other filmakers like me, we are thrown scraps here and there, even our audiences our are a scrap. Twenty to thirty people, doesn't really ammount to a great deal. But, it is better than nothing. You couldn't ask me to take the route of other filmakers. Costa Gavras, for example, who thought if I sugar coat the political message, ie if I use the Hollywood form, if I impregnate the Hollywood form with a political message, then I will suceed in transcending a bourgeois, nationalist, racist ideology.

RSS Do you think the Bourgeois, nationalist, racist ideology exists in the form itself?

JS Yes. It is reflected in very controlled, formula filmaking, even in the hands of Costa Gavras. Especially in his two latest failures.

RSS Can you give me some technical examples of that?

JS Yes. In **Missing** there are lots of scenes of Pepsi Cola, lots of mise en scene, with Pepsi Cola and Coke in the backgroundBut, it's left up to the audience to determine the effects of those things. Its like saying, 'look, I think they already know and perhaps they can make the connections and the links between the exploitation, say in Chile in that case, with the American exploitation'. I don't think this is at all clear. Independent filmakers who have chosen to take a stab at reactionary ideology are much further ahead. But that's not to say I don't think these efforts are worth anything, what Gavras is doing is better than nothing. I am not banning him from the republic. I'm not saying that people who watch those films are watching shadows on the other wall of the cave. I am just saying they are not combatative enough.

RSS But they appeal to a larger Audience. What you consider a sell-out is also a form of asccessibility.

JS I didn't say it was a sellout. I maintained it is better than nothing which means they are politically a step in the right direction. Even tacky films like **Nine to Five**, one could, in a very bizarre and stupid way, say that this film might have been a progressive step. Becuase women were given the fore.

RSS What I am talking about is the broadening of an audience which can be done ideologically or through technical forms, take for instance the Art Audience...

JS The art audience needs to be politicized just as much as any other audience...

RSS Exactly, but if you talk to them in a language they have been socialised to understand, things that they feel they are comfortable with, but at the same time imbue it with a political content...

JS Which is what I think I have done in **Resisting the Pharoahs**. The film's form resembles the vocabulary of my earlier experimental stuff, and I have injected that with politics. I think, by and large, it will be an Artsy audience going to see it. It *might* become a political audience, it *might* be disarmament miovement people who use the film. My hope is they *will* try to use these films.

RSS A further question along those lines is why that choice of medium, if you are interested converting an audience to political awareness, why use film as the medium?

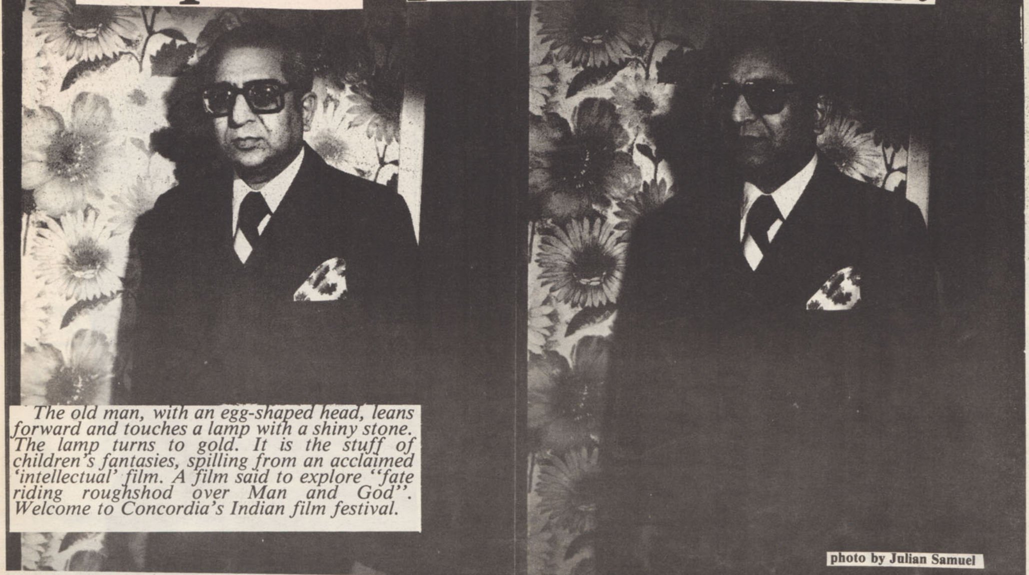
JS That is not the only medium I have chosen to use, I use the printed word, political poetry, I have a radio program on Third World news at Radio Centre-Ville, all these things add up. Maybe I am under some kind of illusion that they have a rupturing effect. That they have an effect of taking on whatthe liars, the belligerant buffoons at the CBC say. Okay, I give in, I say look, it can't be as vast as CBC, I don't have the same listening range, and yes it is nepotistic, it does feed into itself.

RSS In terms of film, what you are saying is that film is only valuable as a means, you don't have a particular interest in the form itself.

JS The internal dynamic represents to me the relationship with the external world. If you have a film which is eisenstinian, which represents some kind of combat of forms, a combat of historical traditions which come together and which jar, yes this is still a fetish. Using image relations which are not conventional, **Resisting the Pharoahs** is again that. It uses relations which aren't predictable, which become a metaphor for what one ought to do in real life. *One ought to examine what the traditional apparatus means in terms of an ideological apparatus*. To throw a crank into the works is the target aim.

ARCMTL 2017

Rupees And Realism



The old man, with an egg-shaped head, leans forward and touches a lamp with a shiny stone. The lamp turns to gold. It is the stuff of children's fantasies, spilling from an acclaimed 'intellectual' film. A film said to explore "fate riding roughshod over Man and God". Welcome to Concordia's Indian film festival.

photo by Julian Samuel

by Leela Rau

The Western world has long lived within its self-created myth of superiority. This has engendered in the rest of the world the reciprocal feeling of "second-classness".

That which arrives from the North is automatically better, be it Nestlés baby formula, Alcan strip mining in Jamaica or **Raiders of the Lost Ark** in Madras. Third World writers fight to be published here — god knows why they would want their books lost among the morass of trash that appears on our bookshop shelves.

For three months the Canadian International Development Agency «CIDA» (in an attempt to recoup their losses), is working in conjunction with the Indian Directorate of Film Festivals and the Indian National Film Development Corporation to present a series of films from the Indian sub-continent. All are made by Indians, in India, essentially for an Indian audience. For many Canadians, this is a chance to see their first "Third World" film. For Indians, it is a recognition of the world's largest film industry.

The Third World is *in*. Late last year, in the breeding ground of imperialism, Brits were "offered an unique opportunity" to see Third World films at London's Festival of Third World Cinema, dubbed 'Third Eye'

Western films with plots based in India concentrate on the wonderful mystical experiences of the white visitor or the romanticism of this ancient land (Taj Mahal by moonlight, etc). Hardly realism in any sense of the word. Films like **Heat and Dust** do little to change this tired old projection.

The scene described at the onset is from *The Philosopher's Stone*. An aging clerk stumbles upon a stone that will turn all metals to gold. He sells all his traditional household pieces of metal, now gleaming, to the local bullion merchant. Soon, Paresh Babu has a vast mansion, a servant and is beginning to run in the 'proper' circles.

Of course, this is not to last. At one point, the clerk mutters "That which is not, that which cannot be". An appropriate summary of all the agonies the main character endures, the caste system comes through loud and clear.

The Music Room, another Ray film, is as simple in meaning. A 'nouveau poor' merchant, (fading aristocracy in the death jaws of modernisation), once able to present all the musical festivities he desired, must resort to pawning the household jewels in order to obtain the best musicians posssible.

He blossoms in his 'music room', an all-male enclave, where musicians, singers and dancers entertain through the night.

After the sudden death of his wife and son, the room is closed while the merchant withers. Suddenly, in an attempt to 'keep up with the Joneses', he decides to hold one more soirée. Death follows upon the heels of his last pageant.

Throughout the film, the swinging chandelier in the music room remains a symbol (exactly what it signifies, is probably best left up to the individual viewer). Yet the film is not highly complex, perhaps too simple for Western tastes.

These two last films, made respectively in 1957 and 1958, are more typical of the older type of film-maker in any part of the world. The story line has a moral and the plots are clear and simple.

Shyam Benegal, shall, for the purposes of this article, be used as the personification of modern 'intellectual' Indian cinema

Western news reports, like western films, ooze 'helpless undeveloped country' sentiments. For instance, the recent spate of journalistic raving over the saintly Mother Theresa. While I cannot condemn her actions, such propaganda obscures the fact that there is life in India, separate from that 'created' by the West. People *do* survive the daily grind, it is harsh and an uphill struggle but there is breathing to be heard. For many, films provide the ultimate (or only) escape from drudgery, one placebo to help wile away a life.

This latter type of film, "popular culture", "Hindi love films" are hardly high-brow, pretentious, intellectual movies. Until last year, heterosexual lovers were never seen kissing on screen. Sex is therefore not the drawing card, although admittedly, violence, pageantry and fantasy are prevalent.

Within the context of India, it is questionable whether consciousness-raising films would serve any constructive purpose. Attendance would be poor and the films wouldn't make good opiates.

However, the same is not applicable to those film-makers who in modern parlance 'have made it'. Such producers have the opportunity (and rupees) to create meaningful pictures. Until recent times, many seemed to seize this opportunity. This is not to say that every film is an ideologue's delight — rhetoric personified. To the contrary, many are artfully simple — homilies and adages concealing the societal message being pushed.

Of the ninety features being shown at Concordia University, a great many are from a single film-maker, Satyajit Ray. Ray, a Bengali, has received a great deal of publicity in the West even though his films are wholly Indian in character.

The Role (by Benegal), is a biographical sketch of an Indian film actress. Forced to continue acting in order to keep her husband content, Usha encounters every possible problem on her road to success. As a child she is poor, living with her widowed mother, she marries her mother's former amour, she has affairs with the male leads, directors etc, she meets a rich man and decides to escape to the countryside, he keeps her confined to the house, she escapes, the list is endless...

Although many of the problems faced are obviously Indian in nature, this film appears to be a concession to the fickleness of Western cinema. Simple stories were just not enough to satisfy the public, more complications had to be added. Yet, I still enjoyed this film more than a comprable Western counterpart.

These films, so different from one another, in quality and technique, retain some undefinable 'essence' of Indian life. The prejudices inherent in the system are reflected, albeit often unconsciously. Unfortunately, it is often growing up with the caste system at the back of your mind that enables one to feel these subtle criticisms. It is possible therefore, that the best social criticisms in these films will not be apparent even to the most aware non-Indian viewer.

It must be hoped that increasing monetary incentives given to Indian film-makers will not lead to the making of films which will bring in millions of rupees but neglect the need for a critical attitude.

These films are being shown at Concordia University every night of the week, through August and September.

The Exploited: White dopes on punk

by Marie Catherine Giguere

RSS: Wattie, you're the only original member in the band. What happened ?

Wattie: When we came back from America last summer our last drummer, had a nervous breakdown. He was the only English member in the band and he couldn't handle working with us Scotts. We used to pick on him because he was English. We did some other gigs and Joe and our old guitarist wanted to do different music like with saxophone players - totally different than from what we're doing. We're still friends and all that. John played guitar on our last album. We're still really good friends but the people in the band (now) are good.

RSS: Yes but now it's half Scottish , half English.

Wayne: Well, we're still trying to rectify that one.

Wattie: We couldn't get any Scottish people who were good enough. There were not a lot of Scott people that came up to audition. In fact, the bass player, we only auditioned him one day and that was Wayne. He had to come to Edinbourough and he was ok. He bought us lots of beer and that.

RSS: He bought his way in...Has the music changed with the coming in of new members?

Wattie: Not really. Even when the old band was here, like I write the lyrics of the songs, but we all put the songs together with what we wanted to hear in the music. So the music can't really change unless we try and change to a totally different direction, which uh, we're not going to do.

RSS: By not changing, don't you think that that limits the **Exploited**? Add to that the general label of an oi-punk band.

Wattie: We've never been an oi band; we're punks. To me punk is like being working class. If that's what punk is, we're a punk band. If we wanted to go play different music then the people that liked you would go and follow someone else. The music the band wants to do,is what we'll do. The people will follow, the people that are into the band.

RSS: But I hear that punk music in England...

Wattie: It's dead. Yeah it's dead. Punk's not dead, but it is in Britain. It started 4 or 5 years ago when we revived it with other bands like **Discharge** and **Antipasta.** Then it was really big - 3000 people at gigs. And if you did a gig yourself you'd get like 600, 700 people. Now if you get 300 people you're doing real well. That other bands get only 25 people means it's getting real bad.

RSS: So what drives the **Exploited** ? What makes them go on?

Wattie: To go abroad and meet people. You play music and have a good time.

RSS: How would you help young bands starting out? Would you like them on stage with you?

Wattie: It's not as easy as that. It's real easy to promise people, to say sure we'll get you a gig every time you're asked but when we first started, we were just a small band then, I got promised lots of tours with, like, name bands then and they go 'sure, sure'. Some of the people in the band then, used to work and we gave up our jobs to go on this tour with the **Cockney Rejects** for 3 months. A week before, the tour doesn't go. Therefore I don't promise other bands that I can get them gigs. If I can get them gigs I'll get in touch with them and get them to play, and give them some money.

RSS: Where do you stand on politics?

Wattie: You get a lot of punk bands that are like anti-government and the bomb and animal rights; I don't believe in all that. I think punks do more than normal people outside,tend to try and make a better world. But I don't. I just do it to enjoy myself, to get drunk and have a good time.

RSS: You don't want to start preaching to people.

Wayne: We're just individuals and we've all got an opinion but it's because we're in a band. If we say something like 'I fucking hate French Canadians' - I don't, right, but I could say it as a joke. People will actually think that I hate French Canadians. They get upset about it.

Wattie: Once I met this Italian in London and he said 'What do you think of Italian punks?' This was a few years ago. And at the time, I'd never been to Italy. I went 'All Italians are good for is making their tanks go backwards and they make good spaghetti.' He took it seriously and I said it as a joke. A year later we went over to Italy and there were hundreds of punks throwing bottles.

RSS: There's a lot of young kids, 12 or 13 years old in Montreal, who are going around with their heads shaved and Mowhawks.

Wattie: We were the first band to wear Mohicans. The **Exploited** started the Mohican craze off 4 years ago when it was anti-social. It was like real odd, one out of maybe half a million people had one. It was like anti-social then, now it's more fashion, it's like a uniform now.

RSS: Some people feel that your lyrics could have a bad influence on youth, the Class of '84 movie image of punks.

ALL: That's shit - agh - that's an American image.

Wattie: That's not punks, that's just actors dressed up. Take punks like ourselves, this is how we live. We don't get dressed up to make a stupid movie to make fun of the kind of people that dress like that. The punks are serious people.

Wayne: Violence is created by the majority of the general public anyways. Rednecks and that, they get too much to drink and can't handle the situation so they just start shouting about and throwing punches at people. It's not often you'll see punks beating each other up, but you'll always see people dressed normally beat each other's brains out.

RSS:L.A.could be looked at as the new punk centre.

Wattie: We've played the biggest show they've had there. There were 5000 people. L.A.'s crowds are really good.

RSS: Is there a sense of rivalry between L.A. bands and British Bands?

Wattie: Some places in America you get all anti-British then again you get places that are like anti-American, so it's half and half.

Wayne:I hate Jello Biafra. Have you heard of the magazine called 'Maximum Rock and Roll'? It's a magazine that Jello Biafra and some of his friends do. It's a big magazine in America but it's more political. They just write total lies in their magazine. We hate them.

Wattie:'Maximum Rock and Rolls' murder.

Wayne:I like the Dead Kennedys..

Wattie: Shut his mouth for that.

Wayne: Jello Biafra fucking writes things the Exploited this, the Exploited that. The guys never even met any of the band before. How can you write fucking things about a band that you've never met before.

RSS:I hear you also have strong feelings about Black Flag.

Wattie: Black Flag are nobodies. They're not even a punk band. They're just fucking a bunch of ass-holes, and Henry's a faggot. They've got fuck all to do with punk in my opinion. They can't even play. One chord wonders.

RSS: What are your future projects?

Wattie: Our last record company, Pax Records, don't write to their adress for information, T-shirts or money, or anything, 'cuz the guy that wns Pax records has fucked off and we don't know where he is. He gave us a cheque for $2000 and it bounced. If anyone knows his adress we'll give him so bad - so give it to me. Don't send any tapes to Pax Records or anything.

X:What he does is use band's tapes to make himself money.

Wattie: Send Black Flag tapes 'cuz they're a bunch of shits as well.

X:A lot of American bands get no publicity in England.

Wattie: You see them later on.

RSS: What do you think of Johnny Lydon's dopy songs like 'This is not a Love song' now?

X:It's good.

Wattie:I've got a lot of respect for him because he does what he wants. We make a lot of enemies becuase I say what I want and I do what I want. Tha's why I have a lot of respect for him. Same with people like Boy George and that. I hate their music but I have a lot of respect for people like him. They don't give a fuck about anyone, they just go and do it. It's easy to have a band and just do what other people tell you what to do like, if a political punk band, just because you're friends are in there, it's better to do something that you want to do and don't be forced by other people's opinions.

X:These bands that preach they slag everyone else off for not believing in what they believe in and that's just like another form of facism.

Wattie: It's pointless arguing with us because we're always right.

RSS:OK, well, thank you.

X:You can't leave, we want to play.

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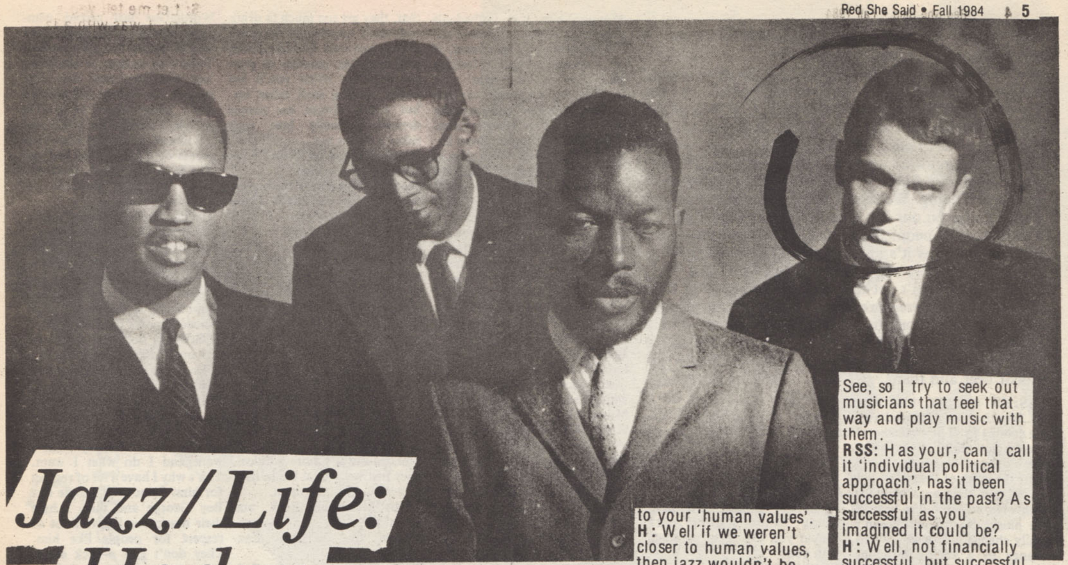

Jazz/Life: Haden

by **Ernest Youngman**

Charlie Haden, born in Missourri and originally a hillbilly singer, first came into prominence as the bass player in Ornette Coleman's original quartet. The series of five Atlantic records recorded by this quartet in the late fifties and early sixties, culminating in the May, 1961 **Free Jazz** stunned the Jazz world. Initially referred to as 'anti-jazz', their validity hotly debated by the jazz establishment, these records, and the group's playing was unusual in that their improvisations were not based on a series of chord changes as had been the rule, but were, rather, based on melody and rhythm. The bass was freed to play a non-chordal, melodically independent role, rather than act strictly as accompaniment.

Haden has been acknowledged as having one of the most beautiful tones in all of jazz, and is universally accepted as being a central figure in the development of the role of the jazz bass. He has been recorded within a wide range of configurations, including his own **Music Liberation Orchestra**, a large, multinational group of players, **Old and New Dreams**, solo performances, and, most recently, as a player on many ECM artists' recordings. In addition to his current work with **Pat Metheny**, his own recording **Ballad of a Fallen Soldier**, dedicated to the soldiers of the Spanish Civil War, was regarded as Downbeat's Record of the Year for 1983.

Haden: Music is one thing and talking about it is something else.

RSS: How do you deal with the fact of untrained audiences in that musically, they might not understand exactly what you're doing? I'm referring particularly to freer music.

Haden: It's not important that they understand. It's important they feel good and have an opportunity to experience something inside or outside themselves that brings them closer to the creativity inside them.

RSS: How do you feel about the art of someone, say Anthony Braxton, that appeals to a much narrower segment of the population. Do you feel there is a certain point where you have to say stop in terms of the music becoming too abstract.

H: I don't think about that. I think about playing music to improve the quality of life. I don't think in terms of categories or musicians playing different musics. I think in terms of honesty, and creative values and beautiful sounds and turning the value system of the world around from a value system of profit oriented, shallow, racist, sexist values to a value system of creative values, human values, honest values, that we find out about when we become close to the creative energy and expression you know exists in the world. The brilliance that is in the world, is in every person, and it is also inside every tree outside. Trees have it but human beings have yet to catch up to it, and I become very impatient because I realize that it will be hundreds of years before people know the brilliance inside themselves to a point where there will be a world of magnificence, without disease, without racism, without inequality and injustice and people will be utilizing their intelligence.

RSS: Can you really believe that there will be such a time a few hundred years from now?

H: Hasn't it gotten better since 1876?

RSS: In some ways perhaps the life of the general population is easier now, but I don't feel that we're any closer to your 'human values'.

H: Well´if we weren't closer to human values, then jazz wouldn't be happening.

RSS: But has jazz changed at all? Or rather, has the quantity of people affected by jazz changed. Didn't Ellington play to larger audiences than your **Music Liberation Orchestra** plays to now?

H: Well, we have different ways of reaching the people. On the tours I'm doing now with **Pat Metheny**, for instance, every concert has been sold out, and most of the people who come there come not really expecting to know what's going on. Some think they're going to hear Pat's group so they're exposed to improvisation they wouldn't ordinarily be exposed to, and it's really a good feeling to know you're broadening the musical horizons of a lot of people.

You've reached people and changed people, and you've exposed them to certain things that cause them to take a second look at what it is that they're in every day, and every night. What is this life that we're living? People who are dedicated to an art form because of a passion inside themselves that they have nothing to do with...Their expression comes out with honesty and with determination to make change. The musicians that have made an impact on the world have within them respect for life and reverence for music, and a feeling of responsibility to change the world for the better. See, so I try to seek out musicians that feel that way and play music with them.

RSS: Has your, can I call it 'individual political approach', has it been successful in the past? As successful as you imagined it could be?

H: Well, not financially successful, but successful in reaching people. About your using the word 'political', well you can spell concern in the same way as you can spell political. It's all a matter of semantics, a matter of understanding. I'm not much of a believer in political organizations. Most organizations, because of different goals, are never able to solidify or bring together people. Many of the radical political organizations are very fragmented. I'm talking about people not being able to get together, to work together as one. That's the thing you find out about in playing music, is that when you're playing with someone who has the same feeling you do, about appreciation, about what it is that you have inside you, whether you want to call it a gift or not. And if you really know that appreciation and respect it, and don't abuse it, those people are always together, see? That's why the music comes out together and inspired. One thing, people listening to each other, inspiring and enhancing each other.

I read everything I can to try and find out about what's going on in the world, but I don't feel the need to belong to any political group. I don't consider myself to be a political person. I consider myself a human being who is concerned about human rights, equality, and justice.

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Jazz/Life: Shepp
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Ernest Youngman

Archie Shepp's first date was a two year stint with **Cecil Taylor's** group in 1960-61. Of Taylor, and his mentor, **John Coltrane**, he has stated that these men have passed on to him the oral tradition of jazz, the music's meaning, intelligence, and ultimately its ability to unify. Poet, playwright, professor (currently at U of Massachussettes) and musician, Shepp traces his roots to the banjo his father played when he was a child, the blues, and the history of the black people.

He was, (and still is today) an enormously powerful player. Responsible for having translated the tradition of the tenor saxophone into the language of the 1960's, he played a central figure in the black nationalist movement in the arts and music of the decade. The ferocity of his early playing as well as his political stance did nothing to enamour him to many of the jazz critics of his time.

Although his playing has modulated somewhat from his early days, he is still capable of either electrifying or disenfranchising his audience depending on where their sentiments lie. This was amply demonstrated at the **Rising Sun** where his slurred, asymetrical, heavily amplified lines drove close to a third of the audience out after the first few tunes, allowing the remainder of the crowd to move their chairs in closer for a thoroughly enjoyable evening of some of the most powerful blowing heard in Montreal this year.

RSS: Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?
Shepp: Sure babe.
RSS: How do you feel about the problem of attempting to do something for black people while your audience is a generally white liberal one. Especially with free jazz it seems you appeal to an even narrower range of white intellectuals. How do you feel about that?
S: Not bad at all. I wish more of them would come out, man. I'd make more money.(chuckles). I'm not trying to do anything for black people. Black people have got to do something for themselves. I want to be a part of that. I support Jesse Jackson, you know, though in another world I might vote for Mondale or Glenn or somebody. But I'm a black man and I know where my best interests lie. On the other hand, I think our struggle rests not with any one individual. I'm not trying to be a Moses or any messianic figure. That I write poetry is no different from Sir Walter Scott or Walt Whitman, or Leroi Jones (Amiri Bakara). That's another kind of statement, another dimension of my personality and another perception of my own cultural experience. So it entails, it involves on the one hand, the community, my whole community outlook. On the other hand I'm not locked into any doctrinaire experience like trying to push somethimg on somebody. So the poem **Mama Rose** (subtitled **A Poem for Malcolm** and performed live) is about my grandmother, but as well it does imply things that are much bigger than both of us or all of us. You know the struggle of the sixties, or what we've evolved into, or what we're trying to do. I hope it's universal.
RSS: That sixties intensity, what's become of it? Was it for naught?
S: It's attenuated. I think things are much softer now. People are much more pacifistic. I don't mean they are not out starting wars or anything but at the same time I think it's kind of a drag that the youth of today are so, well pacifist is the word. They really don't engage the establishment anymore. Kent State was not a bad thing. It was a tragic thing, we have to understand that. Tragedies are often rooted in our social institutional perceptions and how we engage each other. But bad things can often be avoided. Kent State could have been avoided but it was inevitable.

It was inevitable because you had the Panthers, you had Eldridge,you had Malcolm, you had Martin, you had Kennedy, both of them, both of them assasinated. It was a very turbulent time, and the music was turbulent. People ask me why I don't play like that now. How can you play like that when things are not like that now. Black music has always reflected the times. Listen to Ellington in the 20's, that's how people were in the 20's. You listen to music from the 40's, (sings),''missed a Saturday date''...I can hear these tunes and I can put myself right back in that period. So why should I play in the 80's like I did in the 60's. You're honking, squeaking, and bleating, they don't know at the time that people were being murdered, so maybe they are today but it's really a much different thing.
RSS: How do you feel about the group you're playing with now as compared to the players in the 60's? Do you miss the communication of playing with musicians that were your equal in stature? Beaver Harris, Roswell Rudd, Lewis Warrell...
S: You make a film, you want Clark Gable, Rita Hayworth (laughs) you can see I don't see too many films anymore. A star-studded film, you have got to pay for every actor. You mentioned some beautiful people but what you are raising is a very logical question. What you mean is does capitalism interfere with the artistic process in African-American music? Is that the question you're raising? Monk asked me to work with him just before he passed away. God bless him. And don't you think I wanted to work with Thelonious Monk? But with the money he offered me, I could make more as a leader. It would have been a great experience. I've always missed it.
RSS: I still feel a great continuity in your music from the the 60's to the 80's, what...
S: Let me tell you a story. I was with a lady some years ago quite a bit older than myself. She was about my mother's age. She'd moved out to California and while out there she used to listen to some of the good jazz stations out there. When she came out to Philly, where I was raised, we were riding in the car one night going to a party. She happened to be there, we used to call her Auntie Bobby, this lady, everybody's aunt in a sense, but a very attractive woman. Nothing worn out about her.

She said, ''Archie, I've been hearing your music out in California, on the radio; they've got good stations out there,'' and then sort of a lull, a silence you know, then, ''Archie, when are you going to play something I can understand?'' So that really got to me. I thought perhaps my music had gotten out of touch with the people I grew up with. If my mama can't understand what I'm doing, then maybe I'm a long way from home. So like a prodigal son, we return.(In reference to his newest records, spirituals, Charlie Parker covers, duets with either piano or bass).

BILLY BRAGG:

Demystifying Music

by Valerie Erdile

Billy Bragg is a likeable guy: On record he's pensive, even intense; onstage he's hyper, clever, and witty; and in person he's warm and affable. Bursting into the room wearing jeans, a t-shirt and a smile, he's openly approachable on any subject from politics to love to the record industry. Billy Bragg first came to my attention with the release of his first mini LP, **Life's a Riot With Spy vs Spy**, in late 1983. This record attracted a lot of critical praise from the British music press, and made Billy a sort of 'second string' star in his own country. Since that time, he has played an admirable number of gigs, mostly as an opening act, and has recorded a full album's worth of songs, entitled **Brewing Up With Billy Bragg**, for release this October on Polygram in Canada. Meanwhile, Billy Bragg is most concerned with doing what he does best: playing and singing his heart out — just a man and his guitar.

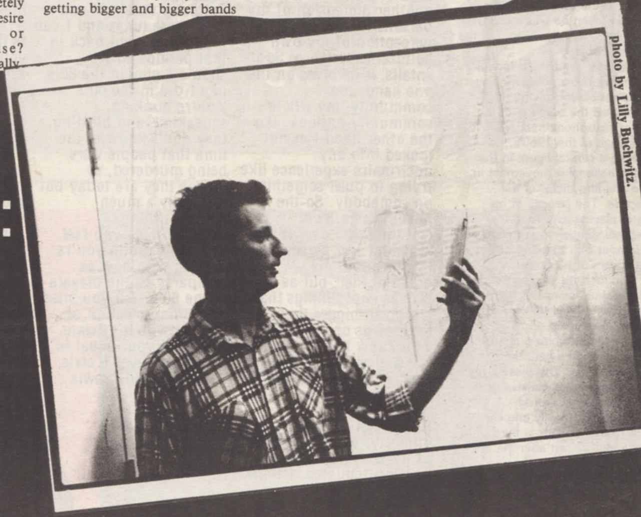

photo by Lilly Buchwitz.

RSS: Your reputation in England is based primarily on live performances, whereas in North America, any reputation you have is based solely on your mini LP. Are you trying to change this?

BB: I am hoping to change that by doing a set of club gigs in North America, hopefully around Christmas time. Touring with Echo and the Bunneymen has really given me an opportunity to suss out people over here and for them to suss me out, and the next time I'm here I hope to play some smaller cities, and smaller clubs.

RSS: What you do lyrically has been compared to what Tom Waits does with Americana: do you see your songs as a sort of introduction to modern Brittania?

BB: I write about living in England. The material comes from a feeling of responsibility to reflect what's going on around me. I guess you could call me a failed romantic — I try to get some sense of realism in my songs, rather than open faith in love as the answer to all your problems. What I try to do is get a bit of myself, a bit of what I do, and how I grew up in my songs, and I'm very happy that I can get payed to do what I really want to do.

RSS What was involved in your decision to record completely solo — was it money, a desire for a simpler form, or something else?

BB It was a bit of each actually. Money was definitely a factor, but it was also important for me to move away from production and packaging and go back to a more simple approach with songs at the fore. I started playing solo through frustration: The people who benefit from punk should not be Spandau Ballet, so I thought to myself that someone had to do and I would give it a go. Part of the reason I do solo is because it's scary — it gives you that edge. I have to rely on my razar-sharp wit to get through the hard spots on stage. It is difficult sometimes to be true to oneself, but you shouldn't get by on sympathy, you should get by on playing songs well. I try as much as i can to be myself on stage — I could change that, but in the end if you are ever going to do anything, you have to use influences and let them come out through yourself.

RSS The singer/songwriter tradition has recently come out again with performers like you and Paddy of **Prefab Sprout** — a sort of post-punk folk revival. How do you fit into this?

BB Billy Bragg is different because I feel I should be as powerful as a band — I should make as much noise as a band. Most pop, like **Wham** is so bland that anything with better lyrics is seen as 'deep and meaninful'. There is a direct link for me throuth the Blues , especially **John Lee Hooker**, where you get that raw feeling without the grand production at a time when everybody else is getting bigger and bigger bands and more technology. The art of great songwriting is when you hear something and you like it but you can't think where you have heard it before.

RSS The singer/songwriter tradition has been much maligned as a step backwards from the post-punk sophistication of pop music.

BB When I grew up and first learned to play the guitar, I listened to Bob Dylan, and I could go out and buy a cheap acoustic guitar, and if i practiced enough, I could play music just like Dylan — in my own bedroom. I didn't need all the technology of Howard Jones. People like that are remystifying music. It is very important to me that music be accsesible. People may see me as being a bit retrograde, but what I am doing isn't folk, it is rock, blues, country and western — I am interested in all of them. If I am a folksinger, I am a fucking Hardcore folksinger.

RSS I notice that you do a lot of benefit gigs. Is this a case of putting your money where your mouth is for socialist causes?

BB I believe in more than just making money from gigs and records, and I try to show people by example that you can act on socialist principles. I joined the British Army in September 1980, but by the time they came to induct me in 1981, I'd changed my mind. In England, you have 90 days to change your mind, so I decided to do the training in order to find out about it. The army in Britian is like a microcosm of the British class system — it's fascinating. The song **Island of No Return** deals with this enormous wave of patriotism that happened after the Falklands war. Margaret Thatcher has the country in a state of terror. The sides are being divided up between them and us.

RSS Are you still happy about being an independent, or do you now feel drawn to something bigger than support spots?

BB I am slowly creeping up the bill of club dates, and I really don't want to do the big video and billboard push. I would rather do support spots and smaller clubs.

RSS How do you feel your music will go over with North American audiences?

BB Some of the songs may be a bit English, but some of them are more cosmopolitan, and I think they will go over quite well. Part of my interest in coming over to America is to meet and talk to the people and find out about it for myself. Living in England we all grew up with **The Rolling Stones** legend: Sex and drugs and rock'n roll. I came here to see what I could learn about the country and the people, not to live a rock star legend.

RSS Your attitude towards bootleggers has been to encourage them - don't you see this, in part, as biting the hand that feeds you?

BB The people that buy bootlegs are the people who have already bought the record, they are the most fanatical fans. I can't stop bootleggers anyway, and the bad quality stuff will show itself up quite quickly — I can't police it. I just have to hope that I can make better quality records than the bootlegs available.

RSS: Your humor is a constant force, whether in live shows or recorded products: is this a defensive tactic or an offensive one?

BB: A bit of both actually. When I get on stage, verbal diarrhea sets in. The piss-taking is part of breaking down the barriers between the audience and the performer, and it makes the audience more susceptible to the songs.

RSS: What can we expect in the future from Billy Bragg?

BB: Well, first of all, I can't wait to get home and play a football match with Ken Livingstone — I'm really looking forward to that. Actually I've got a new 11 track LP coming out in the fall. It's got some organ on one track, some trumpet on another, and just a few guitar overdubs, but it's still just guitar and Billy Bragg baring his soul.

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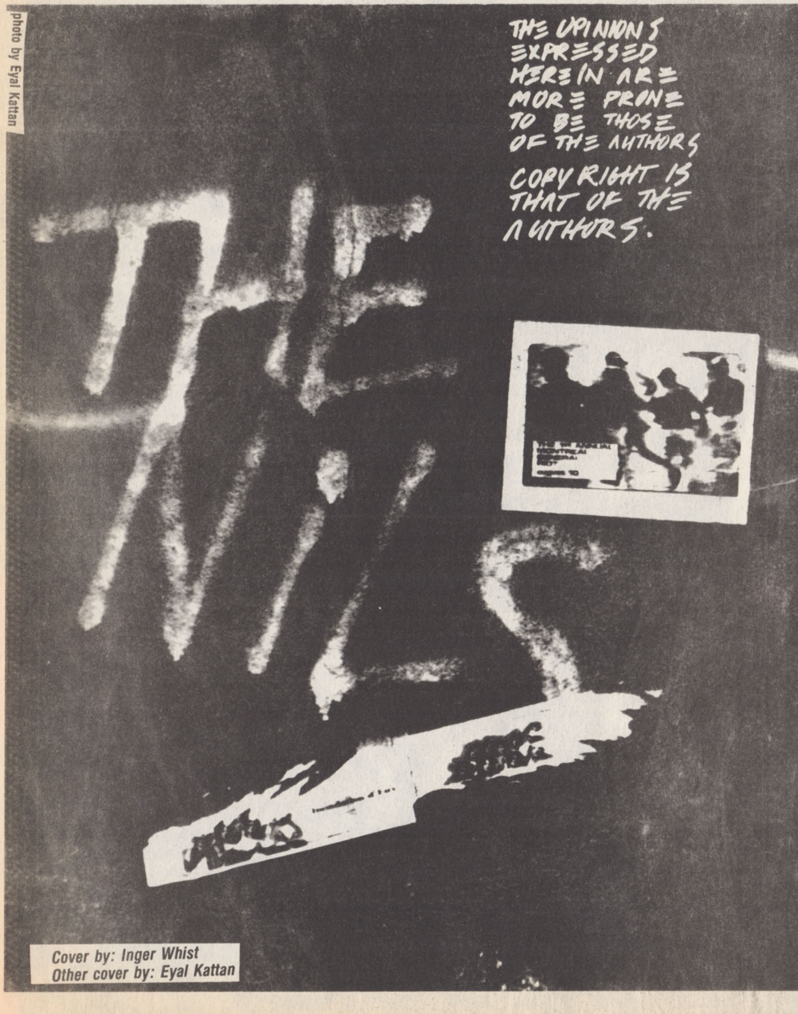
photo by Eyal Kattan



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Contributors are encouraged to participate in as much of the production work as possible. We work cooperatively with the author so that he/she can have a hand in the way his/her article is edited, illustrated, and laid out.

Experimental photography is needed as much as journalistic to illustrate articles. We'd also like have 'artistic' work presented on its own.

Independent work is encouraged.

Editorial decisions will be arrived at cooperatively between the contributor and the Editor(s) on a per submission basis.

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